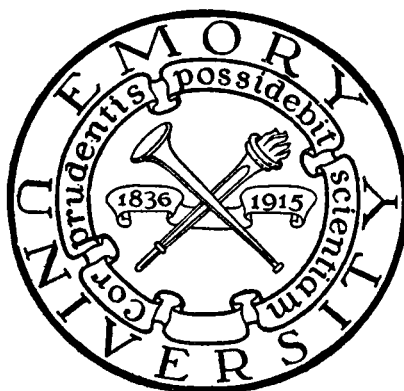




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VOL. III.

“EST-IL-POSSIBLE ?” *Frontispiece.*

INTRODUCTION.



THE ERRORS OF A REIGN.

THE Revolution of 1688 had its origin in the previous century. It was in the conflict of creeds which then arose, under the capricious auspices of Henry VIII., that its first seeds were sown. Essentially a religious revolution, its spirit was kindled at the martyr-fires of Mary; burnt brightly and steadily under the fostering government of her successor; and forty years later, under the wayward rule of Charles I., was roused into fanaticism by the innovations of

Laud—thus paving the way for the Great Rebellion.

Wearied by the struggles of the Civil War, overawed by the despotism of Cromwell, and subdued by the reaction of the Restoration, it yet retained, in secret, something of its original vigour, requiring only to be aroused to become formidable. The nation saw a bugbear in the very name of Rome. It had learned to submit with patience to the abuses of power, to behold with indifference the extinction of its liberties; but its hatred of Rome, though associated with scarcely a shadow of religious freedom, remained unshaken. Aware of this fact, Charles II. concealed his predilections for Popery, and it was reserved for his successor to arouse, by an open alliance with the Pope, the slumbering hostility of his subjects.

James II. ascended the throne, on the

6th of February, 1685, amidst the acclamations of the people. While he called forth those manifestations of attachment which are usually awarded to a new monarch, he possessed the advantage of succeeding a prince, whose profligacy and venality had rendered him odious; and, though opinion was divided respecting his own character, it was anticipated that his habits of business would work a favourable change in public affairs. It is true, the fact of his being an avowed Catholic excited a feeling of distrust in the public mind; but it was hoped that, as he was not wanting in prudence, he would refrain from molesting the Protestant establishment, if it were only to conciliate prejudice, and allay apprehension. On the other hand, the Non-conformists looked to him for emancipation from the arbitrary laws of his predecessor; and the Catholics, long deprived of all

rights of citizenship, and subjected to the most cruel oppression, hailed with delight the accession of a sovereign, whose profession of their faith secured them his sympathy, and might ultimately achieve for them more decided advantages.

The jarring interests of the several powers of the continent rendered James an object of universal attention abroad. The ambitious projects and vast power of Louis XIV., who then governed France, had spread a feeling of terror through all the civilized nations of Europe. Supported by an inexhaustible revenue, immense armies, and a navy greater than that of all Europe combined, surrounded by able and renowned commanders, his ambition seemed to aim at universal dominion, and some new conquest was continually extending his rule and his resources. Spain, weakened by long and repeated wars, was incapable of defending

her unwieldy empire, and, indeed, was so miserably impoverished, that she was unable to pay even the salaries of her diplomatic residents at the various foreign courts. The house of Austria was almost helpless, having, by a long course of tyrannical policy, driven Hungary to revolt, and thus removed a formidable barrier against the power of Turkey, whose victorious armies had twice made their way to the very walls of Vienna. Venice, formerly so potent, was sinking into insignificance, and, in this last stage of her career, displayed scarcely a vestige of expiring greatness. The German States wavered between their hatred of the house of Austria, and their jealousy of the designs of France; and, in all Europe, only the unconquerable spirit of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, the Stadtholder of Holland, opposed an effectual resistance to the French armies.

Left to fight the cause of Europe unaided, the successes of this able prince speedily secured him the co-operation of Spain—of several of the states of Germany, and finally, of the Pope, Odeschalki, a sagacious and spirited pontiff, who had ascended the papal throne under the title of Innocent XI. Yet overmatched by the prodigious resources of France, this holy alliance looked for succour to James, whose connexion with the Prince of Orange—first, as the brother of the prince's mother, and secondly, as the father of his wife—must naturally incline him to espouse his interests. Louis was equally anxious to obtain the support of James, or, at all events, to prevent him from taking part with his enemies, and, with this view, sought to divert his attention from affairs abroad, by stimulating him to extend his prerogative at home. James was but too well-disposed

to listen to his counsel, and thus, when he might have become the arbiter of Europe, contented himself with assailing his own subjects, while his court became a focus of intrigue for all the conflicting interests of the continent.

The internal condition of England was, in many respects, not adverse to the design entertained by James, in this position of affairs, of extending the royal prerogative, and assuming the power of a despotic monarch. The people were almost universally sunk in the grossest ignorance; the age was one of slow communication; the roads, if they might be called such, hardly passable from their natural obstructions, were also infested by robbers, rendering travelling as dangerous as it was difficult; there were no manufactures, no middle class of landed proprietors, and but little political organization; and, to render the task of subjugation still more

easy, a rigorous censorship had almost silenced the press.

The lieutenants and deputy-lieutenants of counties, remote from the seat of government, exercised, in their respective districts, an almost feudal sway; the justices, composed of the inferior gentry, and aping the conduct of their superiors, became so many petty tyrants, daily committing the most flagrant excesses; the police was inefficient, and often secretly in league with the offenders against justice; and the judges themselves had, by their notorious and bare-faced corruption, lost the respect of the people.

The ministry embraced the ablest men of the age—Halifax, Rochester, Sunderland, and Jeffreys, supported by a standing army of twenty thousand men, flushed with recent victory, and believed to be devoted to the king, and by a large and well-manned fleet;

and the suppression of the revolt of Argyle, and the overthrow of Monmouth, with the severities which followed the latter event, and which were familiarly stigmatized as “the Bloody Assizes,” had combined to give it a degree of power and stability, such as had rarely been possessed by any preceding administration.

Nor did the parliament itself offer a great obstacle to the establishment of a despotic government. Owing to the large number of charters which had been cancelled, or suspended in the course of the previous reign, a great many of the corporate towns had been disfranchised; and those which retained their charters were so much under the influence of the court, or of its adherents, that they returned servile and inefficient members—men of low station, even clerks and petty tradesmen, whose only hope of advancement lay in complying with the wishes of the king.

Even the church, careful only for herself, was willing to second the king's views, so long as he refrained from assailing the establishment; and her ministers everywhere preached up the doctrine of passive obedience, as if it were actually an article of national faith.

But absolute power, if the ostensible object, was not the only mark at which the king aimed. While professing an attachment to religious liberty, he sought to break down the domination, if not the supremacy, of the established church. Claiming a share of the public patronage for the members of his own persuasion, he even appointed Catholics to commissions in the army, and to dignities in the church. In these views he was seconded by the queen, Maria d'Este, the adopted daughter of Louis XIV., a woman of great beauty, and not wanting in understanding, but like her consort, a

bigoted Catholic. James was tenderly attached to his queen, and, since his accession to the throne, she had acquired such ascendancy over him, that she even prevailed on him to dismiss his favourite, the Countess of Dorchester. The queen was ably seconded by the Catholic clergy, and particularly by the king's confessor, Father Petre, a Jesuit, and by his chaplain the P^{re}re d'Orleans, whose zeal even outstripped her own, and who aspired to nothing less than the complete re-establishment of Popery.

Meanwhile, James's proceedings were jealously watched by one of the most influential of his subjects, the Earl of Nottingham, who had held office under Charles II., and who had distinguished himself by unwavering attachment to the established church. Nottingham was probably the only man of his time who could command

the uniform confidence of his party. Diligent in his habits, possessed of considerable talent and untiring perseverance, his only drawback was a fastidious caution, which sometimes allowed the favourable moment for action to pass by; but, to compensate for this, he was rigidly honest, and strictness itself in his principles. These virtues, which the venality of other politicians rendered more particularly conspicuous, gained him the respect of his very enemies, and he speedily began to be looked upon as the chief hope of the Protestant cause, and the rallying point of all its adherents.

Nottingham was ultimately joined by a nobleman only second to himself in popularity. As the king developed his hostility to the established church, he found himself opposed in his very cabinet; and George Saville, Marquis of Halifax, one of the ablest of his ministers, expressed himself so de-

cidedly on the subject, that the king immediately dismissed him. No longer under any restraint, Halifax coalesced with Nottingham, and the church party gained a new advocate—

“Jotham of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
Endued by nature, and by learning taught,
To move assemblies.” DRYDEN.*

The inconstancy, however, which Halifax had several times exhibited was not calculated to inspire confidence in his sincerity; and the popular party looked with suspicion on a man who, by consenting to remain in office, had lent a sanction to the execution of Algernon Sidney and of Lord William Russell. But his known abilities, his wit, and his resistless eloquence, added to his high position and immense wealth, rendered him a powerful auxiliary, and his secession

* Absalom and Achitophel.

from the cabinet imparted new strength to the opposition.

The cabinet, indeed, soon became the theatre of further dissension. One of its leaders, Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, younger son of the celebrated Earl of Clarendon, and the king's brother-in-law, found himself opposed by the queen, whom his relationship to the princesses Anne and Mary, rendered jealous of his influence. Rochester was not distinguished by eminent ability, but he derived importance from his high connexions; and in parliament he had signalised himself as an able and fluent speaker. "His infirmities," says North, one of the most zealous of his partisans, "were passion, in which he would swear like a cutter, and the indulging himself in wine."

He had a formidable competitor for the chief direction of the government in the Earl of Sunderland—a pliant courtier,

polished wit, and able politician—who, by his captivating manner, had acquired great interest with the king. Sunderland quickly perceived the queen's aversion to the premier, and, whenever an occasion occurred, sought to turn it to his advantage. Rochester, in despair, endeavoured to strengthen himself against them by recalling the discarded Countess of Dorchester; but this unworthy scheme only accelerated his downfall. He even offered to embrace Catholicism; and desired to hear from some of the Romish clergy, to be appointed by the King, the arguments which could be advanced in support of their religion; but when his request was complied with, he professed that the proof adduced only confirmed him in his original faith, and thus, by flattering the Protestant party, he craftily evaded the disgrace which otherwise would have attended his dismissal.

Besides the queen, Sunderland had an able supporter in the lord chief-justice Jeffreys, whose vigorous understanding enabled him to form a just estimate of his colleague's genius. On the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion, Jeffreys was sent on a special commission into the disaffected districts, with orders to administer to the inhabitants a terrible lesson; and he had acted so completely up to his instruction, that, as was before intimated, his proceedings were known as "the Bloody Assizes," while he himself received the designation of "the Butcher Jeffreys." The trial of Mrs. Gaunt, a poor old woman, and of Lady Lisle, who was nearly eighty years of age, for only affording shelter to two suspected persons, and both of whom he sentenced to death, are memorable instances of his cruelty. Throughout the circuit, indeed, he conducted himself more like a monster than a man. "Nothing,"

says a record of the time, "could be liker hell than these parts: cauldrons hissing, carcasses boiling, pitch and tar sparkling and glowing, bloody limbs boiling, and tearing, and mangling." "England," writes Oldmixon, an eye-witness, "is now an Acel-dama. The country, for sixty miles, from Bristol to Exeter, had a new and terrible sort of sign-posts — gibbets, heads and quarters of its slaughtered inhabitants." The poor people, indeed, were further persecuted by the ferocious Colonel Kirke, whose atrocities are too frightful even for relation. Nevertheless, on his return to court, Jeffreys was received by the King with great favour, and, as a reward for his zeal, was promoted to the office of lord-chancellor. In this new station he began to counsel moderate measures, and steadily supported the advice of Sunderland, who, though opposed by a cabal of Romish

priests, urged continually upon the king the necessity of moderation. Strange to say, they were abetted in this policy by the pope's nuncio, and by a large majority of the English Catholics.

But whatever might be the sentiments of his ministers, whatever might be the secret views even of the pontiff himself, James threw off the mask, and soon openly displayed his hostility to the established church. A Court of High Commission was instituted, which, under the king, was to decide on all cases of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, and, by this court, a decree was issued, prohibiting controversial sermons. Dr. Sharp, Dean of Norwich, a bold and popular divine, bade defiance to the decree; and Compton, bishop of London, his diocesan, was ordered to suspend him. Compton was possessed of great resolution, and, indeed, had originally served as a soldier, but on afterwards entering the

church, had become the preceptor of the Princess of Orange; and, though he expressed the utmost deference towards the king, he refused to obey the court. As a punishment for this temerity, he was suspended from his episcopal office.

The Court of High Commission was but one of the schemes which the king directed against the church. Successful in this, he turned his attention to the parliament, and sought to obtain from it an abrogation of those statutes which disqualified Catholics from holding offices. The parliament, servile in politics, was steadfast in religion, and refused to repeal the obnoxious laws. In this dilemma, the king resorted to the unconstitutional measure of calling each member separately into his closet, and there, with mingled threats and promises, urged their compliance with his wishes. Even this plan failed; and, after a brief and stormy

session, the parliament was prorogued never again to meet.

Such was the state of affairs, when, to the surprise of the whole kingdom, it was suddenly announced that the queen was on the point of becoming a mother. Nothing could exceed the joy of the Catholic party—nothing could equal the mortification of the Protestants, at this unexpected intelligence, which, if the child should prove a prince, might exclude from the throne the Protestant princesses, and secure the succession to a Catholic. Overjoyed at the prospect, the Papists already anticipated the fulfilment of their wishes, and confidently asserted that the child of promise would be a son. Public thanksgivings were even offered up at the Catholic chapels in various parts of the country, distinctly indicating these expectations, and Aphra Behn, the well-known comic writer, actually addressed the

yet unborn child as “Royal Boy !” Such extravagant confidence excited suspicion, and a rumour arose from some unknown source, that the reported condition of the queen was a “pious fraud,” and that the expected heir would be surreptitious. This rumour spread like wildfire ; every action of her majesty, whether of seasonable precaution or the reverse, was tortured into a confirmation of it ; and the suspicion soon became an article of popular belief.

The presumptive heiresses to the crown, the Princesses Mary and Anne, whose interests were involved in the question, naturally shared in the public suspicion of their step-mother. But the person whom it chiefly exasperated was William of Orange, who, in right of his wife, the king’s eldest daughter, had long entertained a hope of inheriting the throne. A temporary cessation of the hostilities in which he was engaged, in behalf of

the United Provinces, enabled him to look more narrowly into English affairs, and he soon found that a large party in England shared in his views, and were but too willing to espouse his cause. Through the medium of Van Citters, the Dutch ambassador, he opened a correspondence with the malcontents, and entered fully into all their grievances. But though conducted with the greatest secrecy, yet being necessarily confided to many, his intrigues were not unknown to James; and it soon became expedient to employ a less ostensible agent, who might more easily elude attention. A ready instrument for the purpose was found in Colonel Henry Sidney, the younger brother of the ill-fated Algernon Sidney, whose political opinions had caused him to be proscribed, and who, while he was warmly attached to the Protestant religion, entertained a bitter animosity towards James,

and burned to avenge himself for the death of his brother.

Thus did James II. plunge from security into peril, and abandon a position of honour, in which he was the arbiter of the destinies of Europe, for that of a miserable caballer.

The sequel of his career will appear in the following story.

BOOK THE FIRST.



CHARLES MOOR.

JAMES THE SECOND ;

OR,

THE REVOLUTION OF 1688



I.

THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

ONE fine spring morning, towards the latter end of the seventeenth century, a young man of tall stature and highly prepossessing appearance, and attired in a suit of deep mourning, halted before a mansion in the vicinity of St. James's Square, at that time occupied by Monsieur Barillon, the French ambassador at the English court.

The portal of the mansion stood wide open, disclosing a large hall, terminated by folding doors, near the entrance of which, in a large leathern chair, shaped like a sentry-box, and studded with gold-headed nails, sat the Suisse, a portly and majestic-looking personage, clothed in a sky-blue livery, superbly decorated with silver, and holding in his hand a long silver-headed cane. Opposite him a bust of Louis XIV. looked down from a niche in the wall, like the tutelary genius of the spot. A motley group of persons thronged the hall—travelers bound for Paris applying for passports; Grub Street pamphleteers; hangers-on of the embassy; and, to complete the medley, some half-dozen of that equivocal class, of both sexes, whose general course of life, or immediate object, veiled in affected mystery, opened a large field for conjecture.

Pushing his way through the assemblage,

the young man addressed himself to the Suisse.

“Is M. Barillon within?” he inquired; “and if so, will you tell him that Mr. Charles Moor desires to speak with him.”

“His excellency is within, sir,” answered the Suisse, with a strong French accent, “and expects you, I know.”

And as he spoke, he pulled a cord behind him; a bell sounded in the inner part of the house; and the folding-doors were instantly thrown open by a couple of French valets in the sumptuous uniform of the ambassador.

“Achille,” cried the Suisse, “conduct this gentleman, Mr. Charles Moor, to his excellency. Be pleased to step this way, sir,” he added, with a bow to the young man, pointing inwards with his cane.

Thus invited, Moor passed forward, not sorry to escape the fawning civilities of the crowd, whom the prompt attention he had

received from the usually insolent household of the ambassador, impressed with a very high notion of his importance.

Achille led the way up a spacious staircase to an upper chamber, where a couple of secretaries were seated at a table covered with boxes of despatches and other correspondence. Both were busily engaged in writing, and merely glanced at the valet and Moor, the former of whom passed on, and opening an inner door, which was sheltered from observation by a large screen, ushered the young gentleman into the presence of the ambassador.

Monsieur Barillon was a slight, middle-sized man, with an agreeable expression of countenance, and a searching grey eye; but bearing the appearance rather of a man of pleasure than of business. Wrapped in a loose brocade dressing-gown, he was lounging back in his chair, and caressing a re-

markedly well-turned leg, clothed in a pink silk stocking.

He received his visitor very affably, and, inviting him to be seated, motioned the valet to withdraw.

“You have, I presume, come but lately from my Lord Nottingham, Mr. Moor,” said Barillon, as soon as they were alone. “His lordship professes much interest in you.”

“Not more, I believe, than he really feels,” replied the young man. “But may I ask if your excellency’s inquiries respecting my father’s marriage, which have caused you so much trouble, are still unsuccessful?”

“I am really concerned, after having kept you so long in suspense, that I cannot give you better news,” returned Barillon, “but the affair is so excessively intricate, that it seems almost impossible to unravel it.”

“I must take leave to differ from your excellency,” rejoined Moor; “I cannot con-

sider the matter at all intricate. The facts are plain and straightforward, and if you will permit me, I will refresh your memory on the subject. My father, the late Lord Mauvesin, when a young man, irritated by the coldness and neglect of the King, retired from the court, quitted England, and took up his abode in Paris. There he became attached to a most lovely woman, the daughter of the Comte de Treville, and secretly married her. I am the offspring of that union; but, unfortunately, I knew little of a mother's love, for she died within two years of her marriage with Lord Mauvesin."

"Ahem!" said Barillon, with a slight cough.

"Allow me to proceed," pursued Moor, colouring. "My earliest recollection represents me as the inmate of a Yorkshire parsonage, the owner of which, from whom I take my

present name, was both my guardian and preceptor. As I approached manhood he sent me to Oxford, and there it was that I first learned that he was not my father, but merely an agent of the Earl of Nottingham, who, for some unexplained reason, took a deep interest in my welfare. I remained at college till within the last few months, when a letter from Lord Nottingham summoned me to London; and, on my arrival, I learned from him, to my infinite surprise, that I was the son of the late Lord Mauvesin, who had just died at Berne, in Switzerland. I learned also that my father had written to his lordship from Berne a few days previous to his decease, avowing his marriage with Louise de Treville, and acknowledging me to be his son. Most strangely and unaccountably, however, this letter has disappeared."

"All this I have heard before," observed

Barillon, with a half smile; "and I have listened to you thus long because I wished to hear your own version of the story. Does it not strike you that if Lord Nottingham really had received such an important letter as you describe, he would have taken somewhat more pains as to its custody?"

"You do not doubt his lordship's statement?" rejoined Moor, quickly.

"Far from it," answered Barillon, "but the world may not believe him so readily. They will naturally wonder why he did not immediately place the letter in the hands of his legal adviser, with instructions to him to institute proceedings for the assertion of your rights!"

"But you know how the circumstance occurred," said Moor. "His lordship had scarcely recovered from the surprise occasioned by the perusal of the document, when he was suddenly called out of the room;

and, in the hurry of the moment, he incautiously left the letter in an open writing-case. On returning, he found it gone, nor could he in any way discover by whom it had been abstracted."

"A most unfortunate circumstance for you," said Barillon, shrugging his shoulders. "The absence of proof of your origin, which this letter would have afforded, secures to your father's nephew, the present Lord Mauvesin, the title and estates of the family."

"I have hopes from your excellency," rejoined Moor. "Lord Nottingham confidently believes that you will be able to discover some evidences of my mother's marriage, and my own birth, in Paris."

As he awaited a reply, he looked earnestly in the minister's countenance, but it completely baffled his investigation.

"Lord Nottingham is scarcely entitled to

my good offices," said Barillon, at length ; "he seizes every opportunity of opposing the interests of the king, my master, and of abetting the designs of his enemies ; while your rival, the present Lord Mauvesin, on the contrary, has always been on the best terms with me. If Lord Nottingham is really desirous to secure my assistance, the proper course will be to solicit it in person, and not through you."

"Your excellency well knows," replied Moor, "that in the present position of parties, his lordship cannot communicate with you personally. I have only, therefore, to thank you for the audience you have afforded me, and to retire. If you have any further communication to make to me, I am to be heard of at the Burleigh Arms, in Cecil Street.

"You will deliver my message to his lordship?" said Barillon, as the young man arose.

“Assuredly,” answered Moor ; “but I am persuaded he will decline the invitation. Whatever, however, may be his lordship’s decision, I must take leave to say for myself, that I would sooner bear for ever the present stigma on my birth, than seek to efface it by treason to my country.”

Before he had finished speaking, the door behind him was suddenly thrown open, and Achille, somewhat to Barillon’s confusion, introduced another visitor, announcing him as “The Earl of Sunderland.”

Though taken by surprise, and somewhat abashed at the presence in which he found himself, Moor ventured a glance at the new comer, who, as Prime Minister of England, could not fail to interest him greatly. The Earl of Sunderland was about forty years of age; but time had fallen lightly upon his head. His person was still good ; and, in his lofty features, he yet retained much of

the beauty he had inherited from his mother—the far-famed Sacharissa of Waller. He was attired in black velvet, edged with silver, and his dress exhibited his stately figure to great advantage. But it was not in nobility of person alone that nature had been bountiful to Sunderland. Descended from an ancient and illustrious house, his father had died in arms for the throne, at the battle of Newbury, lamenting, with his latest breath, the probable consequences to his country of the success of the King—circumstances which could not fail, on the one hand, to recommend his son to the ill-starred monarch's successors, while, on the other, it won him the sympathy of the people. Carefully educated by his mother, he studied the science of politics in the leading courts of Europe, at which, 'on the accession of Charles II., he was early employed in several diplomatic missions,' and hence he acquired

such a perfect acquaintance with foreign affairs, that he was justly esteemed the first diplomatist of his time. He was afterwards recommended by Sir William Temple to the Duchess of Portsmouth, who, notwithstanding that he had voted with the opposition on the Bill of Exclusion, secured him the protection of the Duke of York, under whose auspices he entered the cabinet of Charles II. His graceful manners, insinuating address, and polished wit, still more refined by intercourse with foreign courts, were qualities so much in accordance with the tastes of the monarch, that he speedily gained an ascendancy in his councils ; and, at his death, retained his influence over his successor.

With a genius less brilliant than that of the Marquis of Halifax, he had yet succeeded in driving him from power ; and, by his interest with the queen, had triumphed over the exalted connexions and more active

abilities of the Earl of Rochester ; but while he brought about the downfall of these popular favourites, he contrived to maintain a degree of popularity himself, and from the moderation of his behaviour, acquired the credit of all the wise measures of his administration, while the odium of every arbitrary transaction was thrown on his colleagues. He even enjoyed the confidence of a large section of the Catholics, together with that of the Spanish ambassador, and of the Papal nuncio, who knowing that the tendencies of the other ministers were decidedly Gallican, conceived him to be their only security against an alliance with France, and, to complete the anomaly of his position, he cultivated the most friendly relations with Barillon, who, though scarcely satisfied of his sincerity, rarely failed to lend him support.

Sunderland regarded Moor curiously as the latter withdrew.

“There goes a flaming patriot, my lord,” said Barillon to the prime minister as they were left alone, “who thinks it treason even to speak to a Frenchman.”

Sunderland smiled. “Some of us are not so scrupulous,” he said. “Who is he?”

“A *protégé* of Nottingham’s,” returned Barillon, “and the pretender to the Mauvesin peerage.”

“Oh! is that Charles Moor?” exclaimed Sunderland, with some appearance of interest. “He is very like my poor friend the late Lord Mauvesin; and whatever may be thought of the young man’s pretensions, his features alone, with me, give ample evidence of his paternity.”

“Every one admits, I believe, that he is Mauvesin’s son,” observed Barillon, “and it is equally clear that Mademoiselle de Treville was his mother; but there is no evidence of any marriage between the pair.”

“So I have heard,” rejoined Sunderland. “However, it says a great deal for the truth of his pretensions, that he has the support of such a man as Nottingham. But to business, for I am come to you on a matter of the utmost importance. It would be idle and impolitic in me to conceal from you my anxiety at the present posture of affairs. Since the accession of your new adherent, Father Petre, to the cabinet, I have found the difficulties by which I am surrounded almost insurmountable. The Jesuit’s influence over the King almost negatives mine; and the over zeal he has exhibited in the cause of his religion, has excited much jealousy among the people, that the government has lost all hold of their affection. To aggravate this dilemma, the Church party is about to form a league with the Dissenters, and under the guidance of Nottingham, their united strength will be sufficient not

only to overthrow the ministry, but to endanger the stability of the throne."

"Surely you exaggerate the danger, my lord," said Barillon, with affected uneasiness.

"Not a whit, sir," replied Sunderland; "and as I feel my own inability to cope with the crisis, I have resolved to resign my seat in his majesty's councils."

"I should greatly regret such a step, which would be fraught with fearful consequences," replied Barillon, quickly; "but can we not devise some means of inducing you to remain a little longer in office?"

"Possibly you might," replied Sunderland: "as I have just said, the Church-party is preparing to league with the Dissenters, and it is my policy to keep them assunder. To accomplish this, some concessions must either be made to Nottingham, or measures of general toleration must be adopted. The

queen, who honours me with her undivided confidence, leans to the Dissenters ; and I myself incline to liberty of conscience. But I fear that Father Petre will oppose both schemes ; and, in that case, my success must depend on the support of your excellency."

"Am I to understand that you desire Father Petre's dismissal?" asked the ambassador.

"I shall be content if his influence with the King is counteracted," replied Sunderland : "this your excellency can accomplish."

"You may count upon my best efforts to do so," said Barillon.

"In which case you are sure to succeed," replied Sunderland, rising, "and in return you may calculate upon my support when you require it. Remember, you induce me to remain in office."

"I am charmed to think so," replied

Barillon. And after an interchange of compliments between them, coupled with earnest assurances of mutual confidence and regard, Sunderland withdrew, attended by Barillon as far as the summit of the staircase.

As the ambassador returned to his chamber rubbing his hands gleefully, for he flattered himself he had duped the wily minister, he was somewhat surprised to find it occupied by a stout personage, with an ill-favoured visage, blotched and inflamed by strong potations. This man, whom the ambassador instantly recognised as Elkanah Snewin, a constable, and one of the most diligent of his secret agents, was armed with a hanger, and wore a brace of pistols in his girdle.

“Soh, sirrah!” exclaimed Barillon, sharply, “how came you here?”

“Beg pardon, your excellency,” said Elkanah, bowing obsequiously, “but Achilles

warn't in the way, and so, as I was in a hurry, I made bold to come up the private staircase. My business is werry important, werry important, your excellency."

"Well, let me hear it," said Barillon, impatiently.

"I must be brief, your excellency, brief, answered Elkanah, "for I harn't a moment to spare. I received information that Colonel Sidney, the secret agent of the Prince of Orange, has just come over from the Hague, and will be at the Burleigh Arms, in Cecil-street, at two o'clock, for the purpose of meetin' some young gen'l'man. Your excellency is aware that the colonel's an outlaw, and if I could only nab him, I should, no doubt, find on his person a lot of useful papers. But I'm rayther afraid of the job."

"How? afraid!" exclaimed Barillon.

"Vy, your excellency sees as how Lady Sunderland—" stammered Elkanah.

“ Ah, true ! ” said Barillon, “ Colonel Sidney is her uncle.”

“ Somethin’ more than her uncle, your excellency,” said Elkanah, with a coarse leer ; “ lovyer would be nearer the mark.”

Barillon, though he looked up, paid no attention to the observation.

“ Sidney must be secured,” he said, at length ; “ and I will protect you from the vengeance of Lady Sunderland.”

“ Then I’ll be off at vonce, your excellency,” returned Elkanah.

“ Stay,” exclaimed Barillon, “ a thought strikes me. Did you not say that it was at an inn in Cecil-street, that you were to find Colonel Sidney ? ”

“ The Burleigh Arms, your excellency.”

“ Do you happen to know the pretender to the Mauvesin peerage—Mr Charles Moor ? ”

“ Know him,” answered Elkanah. “ Oh,

yes! I knows him well enough, and a promisin' young feller he is."

"He is also at the inn in Cecil-street," said Barillon; "probably, indeed, he is the very young gentleman who is to meet Colonel Sidney. If you find them together, arrest him likewise."

"Now I've got your authority, I don't care what I do," rejoined Elkanah. "So vishin' your excellency a good mornin', I'll set about the job."

And with a scrape of the foot he clapped his hat on his head, and bustled out of the room.

II.

COLONEL SIDNEY.

PLUNGED in deep and earnest thought, Moor made his way along Pall-Mall. Objects presented themselves to view as he passed on, that if he had been less absorbed by painful reflection, might have excited his interest; but, as it was, he scarcely noticed the seminary priests and friars, who now appeared openly in the streets, giving London the aspect of a Catholic city. He did not slacken his pace till he reached Cecil-

street, and proceeding to its further extremity, entered a large inn adjoining the river, a sign-board over the door of which announced it to be "THE BURLEIGH ARMS, KEPT BY JEREMIAH LITTLEHALES, LICENSED VINTNER."

Jeremiah himself was standing in the passage, on the look out, it appeared, for Moor, and advancing towards him with an air of mystery, he whispered in his ear.

"He's here, sir, a-waitin' to see you, sir."

"He! who?" exclaimed Moor.

"Why, the Spanish captain, to be sure," replied Littlehales.

"Shew me to him directly," said Moor, quickly.

"This way, sir," returned Littlehales, "this way!" And he added, as if from habit (for no one called him), "Comin', sir, comin'!"

He then led the way along a narrow side

passage, and throwing open a door, made way for Moor to pass through, which done, he carefully closed the door behind him.

Moor found in the room a middle-sized slightly-built, but apparently very muscular man, with remarkably black piercing eyes, and an enormous beard and moustaches—so enormous, indeed, as almost to look as if they were intended for disguise. His costume had a sufficiently Spanish air to warrant the assertion of Mr. Littlehales, that its owner belonged to that service, and consisted of a black velvet jacket, buttoned up to the throat, with a cloak of the same colour and material, dangling from the left shoulder, a pointed Spanish hat, black nether garments, and boots. In this attire few would have recognised the celebrated beau Sidney, who, according to Gramont, had triumphed over the heart of the first Duchess of York.

“Welcome, my young friend,” cried Sid-

ney, advancing towards Moor; "you are punctual to your appointment."

"It is from you then that I am to receive a letter for Lord Nottingham, Colonel Sidney?" said Moor, returning the other's greeting. "I was not aware of it."

"Yes," replied Sidney, "and I will give the despatch to you at once."

So saying, he drew forth a sealed packet, and presented it to Moor.

"It is not for Lord Nottingham himself, then?" observed Moor, glancing at the superscription of Thomas Howard.

"May he not, for some good and lawful purpose, style himself plain Mister Howard, as well as I may call myself Captain Fernando Gonzalez?" returned Sidney, with a smile. "But put up the letter; more than one man's head, perhaps, may depend on its safe custody."

Thus admonished, Moor thrust the letter

into his vest, while Sidney pressed him to be seated, and took a place beside him.

“Notwithstanding a preconcerted arrangement, I should have delivered this letter myself to the Earl of Nottingham,” he said, “but I found that he is not staying at Kensington, but has gone to Burleigh, in Rutlandshire.”

“And I am to convey the letter to him there?” said Moor.

“Without delay,” replied Sidney; “I am sorry you will have so long a ride, particularly as the roads are bad, and infested with highwaymen. But these are slight obstacles to a resolute young fellow like you. Now tell me what is going forward in the political world? They are all at sixes and sevens in the cabinet, I hear; while the court is broken up with religious dissensions.”

“Rumours have now and then reached me, I confess, which shew a general jealousy

of his majesty's religious opinions," replied Moor, "but I have been so occupied by my own private affairs, that I have given but little heed to them."

"What of Lord Nottingham?" asked Sidney.

"Lord Nottingham, I know, is warmly attached to the church, replied Moor; but in the few conversations I have held with him on the subject, he seems to dread less an attack on the church than the prospect of an alliance with France."

"And well may he dread it," observed Sidney. "Such an alliance would be the ruin of this country."

"The present attitude of foreign powers, it cannot be denied, is alarming," said Moor, "and may well embarrass our politicians. On the one side we see the French king, who has just signalised his orthodoxy by a cruel persecution of the Huguenots, setting

himself in array against the Catholic monarchs of Austria and Spain, and even the Pope; and while he supports the Romish faith with fire and sword, uniting with the Turk and infidel against the Pope himself. On the other hand, the Pope, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Spain, who are naturally no less interested in the maintenance of their religion, are found in alliance with the heretic Prince * of Orange, and waging war on Louis, while both parties seek the support of our own sovereign. The latter, though he receives with open arms the persecuted Protestants of France, assigns them a place of refuge, and raises a subscription for their relief, is suspected of collusion with Louis; and while he professes to seek only general liberty of conscience, is accused of meditating the destruction of the Protestant church."

"It is plain, my young friend, that you

lean to the King's side," returned Sidney, who had listened to this speech with a smile; "but you speak so frankly, that I cannot but answer you in the same spirit. The King, as you may have heard, has lately imposed a Papist dean on Magdalen College; and because the fellows refused to elect him—no person professing the religion of Rome being eligible to the dignity—has deprived them of their charter. Indeed, he rashly claims a power of suspending the laws, by which, in defiance of the Test Act, he nominates Catholics to official stations; and to cover the indulgence he shews to members of his own persuasion, is supposed to be meditating measures of encouragement to the non-conformist. These proceedings, coupled with the fact that he is surrounded by priests, afford, I think, conclusive evidence of his bad faith."

"Do you object, then, to the removal of

the disabilities of the Protestant dissenters?" asked Moor. "Surely there is little ground for apprehension in such a measure!"

"Leaving out of the question its propriety, what is the motive that dictates it?" retorted Sidney. "Is it not undertaken for the purpose of disuniting the Protestant party, and winning over the dissenters to attack the church?"

"Even though it should be so," smiled Moor, "which I am far from admitting, a little evil may sometimes give rise to great good."

"You must admit, however, that the simple circumstance of the King receiving an ambassador from the Pope in a public audience, is unlawful," rejoined Sidney. "Besides, he has recently appointed his confessor, the Jesuit, Father Petre, to a seat in the privy council."

"I grieve to hear it," answered Moor,

with a sigh; "worse news for our poor country."

"The worst remains to be told," said Sidney, lowering his voice to a whisper; "they say the expected heir, whom the priests have foretold will be a prince, will not be *the son of the queen*."

"It is a false and shameful rumour," exclaimed Moor; "and he who first propagated it knew it to be such."

Scarcely were the words uttered, when the door of the room was suddenly thrown open, and Littlehales rushed in.

"Fly, colonel! fly!" he cried to Sidney. "Elkanah Snewin, the constable, with a couple of myrmidons at his heels, is a-coming down the street."

"But he may not be coming to look for me," said Sidney, carelessly.

"I'm sure he is from his looks," replied Littlehales, "fly! fly!"

“ Which way ? ” demanded Sidney, starting to his feet ; “ not by the street ? ”

“ No ! no ! through the winder,” said Littlehales, in great trepidation ; “ there ’s a boat below, make off in it.”

Darting to the window, and withdrawing the bolt, Sidney hastily threw the sash open, and passed through. The chamber, it appeared, was built on girders, which, resting on a tier of piles, broke out from the main fabric, and abutted on the river. At high-water the stream came directly under it ; and though the tide was now on the ebb, the water was still well up with the outer piles, close to one of which, about ten feet below, and fastened by a chain to the window-sill, was a small boat, which Sidney easily drew alongside. With the aid of Moor, who had followed him to the window, he then lowered himself to the boat, and alighting in it, instantly pushed off.

Moor and Littlehales had hardly closed the window, when the expected official made his appearance.

“What, all alone, young squire!” he said to Moor; “vere ’s your comrade? Vere is he, eh?”

Moor turned away, without deigning him a reply.

“Order out my horse,” he said to Littlehales, “and let me have my reckoning quickly.”

“Directly, sir,” answered Littlehales, glad to be released, “your reck’nin’ immediately.”

“Now, then,” interposed Snewin, majestically, “none o’ this nonsense! D’ye think as how you can overreach Elkanah Snewin, one of his majesty’s constables? It may be, young squire, you’ll have to go forth afoot, instead of on your prad, with a pair of bracelets on your wrists, and pay your next

reck'nin' to the gov'nor of Newgate. Who have you got in your house, old Jerry, eh?"

"What sort o' customer do you want, Mr. Snewin?" asked Littlehales, with affected indifference, though he trembled all the time in his shoes.

"You knows vell enough who I wants," answered Snewin; "so no gammon, but tell us at once who you've got."

"To begin at the top, then," said Littlehales, "there's old Hyams, the Jew pedlar, in the back attic, as thorough a rogue as you'd wish to meet. He's a spare, middle-sized man, with a beard like a billy-goat, and a nose and chin like a pair of nut-crackers."

"Vell, go on," said Snewin. "I don't want Mr. Hyams just yet."

"Front attic's a country parson," resumed Jeremiah, "a great scholar, who has

come to London with a sermon on the Millennium, hopin' to make a livin' by it; but he 's locked up for his reck'nin'. There 's no mischief in him, though, I'm sure; but I can't say as much for the blue bed-room."

"Ah!" cried Elkanah. "Vot sort of a feller is he?"

"One o' your knowin' ones," answered Littlehales, with a significant wink. "He goes in and out like a cat, never looks you in the face, and yet eyes you all over. I don't know what to make of him."

"Come to the pint!" cried Snewin, emphatically. "What 's he like? Is he short, rayther thin built, and a good-lookin' phiz."

"That answers to his description—rayther," answered Littlehales.

"He 'll do," returned Snewin. "Just shew us his crib, and we 'll make him move his legs a bit."

"His *is* legs!" grinned Littlehales, "the bandiest I ever see."

“Is he bandy?” cried Snewin.

“His legs is like a hoop,” replied Littlehales. “But come and see ’em, and if ever you see bandier—”

“My man’s legs aint bandy,” returned Snewin. “Who else have you got?”

“There ’s a young Staffordshire squire in the best bed-room,” said Littlehales, “who has just come to his fortin’ and so he ’s also come to London to see life. He ’s got on famously, for though he ’s only been here a week, he drinks all night, sleeps all day, and swears like a lord. He ’s the last except the tap, and I can tell you who ’s there in a minute. There ’s—”

“That ’s enough!” exclaimed Snewin. “I ’ll have a peep round myself, and if you ’ve only been trying to get me into a line, you ’ll stand a chance o’ runnin’ your own neck into a noose.”

Chuckling at this stroke of facetiousness,

he turned to the door, and called in two of his myrmidons, whom he had left outside. One of these, who was armed like himself, he instructed to guard Moor and Littlehales, charging those persons not to leave the room, as they valued their lives; and, with the other, he proceeded to search the house. But whether it was that there was nothing to discover, or that the inquisition was unskilfully executed, Snewin's labours were fruitless, and, after half an hour's absence, he and his satellite returned to the room much as they had left it.

"I 'm certain the colonel has been here," he cried to Littlehales, furiously. "What have you done with him?"

"What colonel, Mr. Snewin?" answered Littlehales, with an appearance of simplicity. "If you mean Colonel Carpenter, he hasn't been since last night, when the six-bottle club met in the blue parlour."

“Colonel Carpenter be d—d,” cried Snewin, furiously; “the colonel I mean, as you werry well know, is Colonel Sidney, the Orangerian spy.”

“Never heerd of him, Mr. Snewin—never, as I ’m an honest man and a good publican!” exclaimed Littlehales.

“You ’re neither the vone nor the t’other,” cried Snewin; “and a day will come when I shall have you hard and fast for abettin’ a traitor and a spy, and meantime I ’ve made some discoveries in your cellar, my old cove, which shall go to the ears of the officers of the excise. As to you, young squire, it ’s not the last time we shall meet, take my word for it.”

And dealing a vindictive look at Moor, he withdrew with his myrmidons.

Moor only tarried to proffer a few words of comfort to the poor terrified landlord,

who sank into a chair after the constable's threat, and having discharged his reckoning, he mounted his horse, and rode forth in the direction of Highgate.

III.

THE GOLDEN FARMER.

AN hour's hard riding brought Moor to the skirts of Finchley Common, where there was a small roadside inn, at which he paused to refresh himself, and while he was thus engaged, another horseman came up, who drew the rein for a moment, as if with the intention of halting likewise, but immediately afterwards changed his mind, and set forward again. He had not proceeded far, however, when Moor overtook

him, and finding him to be the King's chemist, M. Saint Leu, a French emigrant, with whom he was slightly acquainted, he slackened his pace, and entered into conversation with him.

Saint Leu exhibited some unwillingness to talk at first, but he speedily shook off his reserve, and then became almost eloquent. Turning the conversation on philosophy and literature, he spoke of the discoveries of Newton, the scientific labours of Boyle, the poetry of Milton, Waller, Marvel, and Dryden, and even the political writings of L'Estrange, in a manner that proved him to be both well read, and well informed. In this way they rode on together for some distance, until they came to a more secluded part of the road, where stood a gibbet, from which dangled, in rusty fetters, the mouldering carcase of a highwayman.

“There hangs Jem Whitney!” said Saint Leu, “called by his familiars, the Dimber Tulip, one of the most daring of the knights of the road. The Tulip thought it beneath him to rob on a small scale, so his last adventure was for seven hundred pounds, which he succeeded in carrying off, but with what result you now behold.”

“This solitary spot is just the place for such an achievement,” remarked Moor, “and, indeed, the whole Common is very lonely; but there are so many people about to-day, that one need scarcely fear being robbed. How comes it that the road is so thronged?”

“I will tell you,” replied Saint Leu. “All these people are Dissenters, and they are proceeding to a meeting, held by various persuasions to celebrate the liberation from prison of Richard Baxter, the non-conform-

ist divine. I myself am going to the meeting, which is to be held at the further end of the Common, where Baxter and others will deliver addresses."

Before Moor could reply, they were suddenly confronted by a third horseman, who rode across the Common—a square-built man, with wide funnel-topped boots drawn up above the knee, and wrapped in a loose riding coat of dark green cloth, from the pockets of which peered the butt ends of a pair of large horse pistols. His broad-leaved hat was pulled over his brow, and he was mounted on a strong-boned gray horse, which seemed capable of going through any amount of work.

Riding leisurely forward, the strange horseman eyed the two companions very closely, and, as he drew nearer, appeared to recognise St. Leu, and slightly nodded to him. He then looked more narrowly at Moor, and

not appearing satisfied with the investigation, cast an inquiring glance at St. Leu. The latter replied by a significant gesture, and the horseman immediately rode off across the Common.

“ We were talking of highwaymen just before that fellow rode up,” said St. Leu ; “ Who do you think he is ? ”

“ A highwayman, I suppose,” replied Moor.

“ A very notorious one,” said St. Leu ; “ he is the Golden Farmer.”

“ Indeed ! ” interrupted Moor, whose suspicions had been aroused by the other’s evident intimacy with the horseman. “ As I have a long ride before me I must increase my speed. I wish you a good day, Mr. St. Leu.”

“ Good day, then, if you will have it so,” replied St. Leu ; “ but you may possibly regret parting with me.”

He did not, however, press his company

further; and Moor, urging his horse into a gallop, rode forward, and ere long passed a party of some twenty or thirty pedestrians, headed by a venerable-looking man, mounted on a mule, who, he concluded, were repairing to the Dissenter's meeting. The pace at which he was proceeding, however, soon made him lose sight of them, and presently afterwards not a soul was visible, either upon the highway or on the wide Common around.

At length the road swept round a deep dry gravel-pit, and immediately beyond this, the view was interrupted by a dense thicket. As he reached this point he was startled by a sudden scream.

Spurring instantly forward, Moor rounded the corner of the road, passed the edge of the thicket, and found that the screams proceeded from two ladies, whose chaise had been stopped by the highwayman he had seen a short time previously.

Intimidated, it appeared, by the threats of the robber, the younger of the two ladies was on the point of surrendering her purse and trinkets, when Moor dashed up to her aid.

“Off, villain!” he shouted to the highwayman, at the same time drawing a pistol.

“Come, no poaching on my manors, mate,” replied the other, coolly; “the Golden Farmer brooks no interference—so go your way.”

“You are mistaken in me, ruffian,” replied Moor, “I am no highwayman; and if it were not for the presence of these ladies, I would convince you to the contrary by sending a bullet through your brain.”

The Golden Farmer laughed loudly and contemptuously.

“I paid you the compliment of supposing you to be a highwayman, my blade, because I saw you with a friend,” he rejoined, “but since you put up for a gentleman I’ve

no objection to treat you as such, only don't meddle with me when I 'm busy. The road is open to you, and I 've no time for further parley."

"Do not expose yourself on our account, sir, I entreat you," interposed the younger lady, whose great beauty had already attracted Moor's attention, and speaking in a slightly foreign accent. "The gentleman shall be welcome to these trifles, if he will only allow us to proceed."

"You hear what the young lady says, my blade?" said the Golden Farmer, laughing, "don't expose yourself, I beg of you," he added, mimicking her accent.

Highly incensed, Moor sprang forward, and seizing the highwayman by the throat, nearly dragged him from his saddle. But the other, though taken by surprise, quickly recovered himself, and being a man of immense personal strength, a desperate strug-

gle ensued between them. The cries of the ladies were now renewed, the more so as they perceived Moor was likely to be worsted in the encounter, when the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard round the corner, and St. Leu galloped up.

"Hold, hold!" he shouted. "Leave him alone, Freeman, or I withdraw my protection from you."

"Call off your bull-dog then, or I'll throttle him," roared the Golden Farmer, furiously.

"Let him go," cried St. Leu to Moor. "He will do you no injury."

"Never!" replied Moor. But before he could make further effort, he received a severe blow on the chest from the highwayman, which knocked him from his horse, and ere he could regain his feet, the latter had ridden off, and was disappearing behind the thicket.

“I hope you are not hurt, Mr. Moor,” said St. Leu, dismounting to his assistance. “I told you you would regret parting with me, but I little thought when I said so, that you were hastening to the rescue of my niece.”

“Is this your niece, sir?” cried Moor, regarding with surprise the lovely girl, whose countenance expressed the liveliest interest in his safety.

“This is Mademoiselle Sabine Saint Leu; and the other lady is her *gouvernante*, Madame Desjardins. They are both very much indebted to you.”

“Indeed, we are,” said Sabine. “You have suffered much on our account.”

“My only regret is that I did not arrive a few minutes earlier,” replied Moor. “I might have saved you any annoyance from this highwayman.”

“I fear I shall be obliged to hang the

rascal after all," said Saint Leu, "though he has some redeeming points about him—but I must now ask you, Sabine, how it happens that I find you here? I suppose you wished to attend the Dissenters' meeting? Was it so?"

"Precisely so, uncle," replied Sabine; "I prevailed on Madame Desjardins to accompany me. We anticipated no danger."

"If we had, we certainly should not have come," said Madame Desjardins.

"Why, here 's your driver under the horses' feet," said Saint Leu, observing the postilion lying on the ground, "I hope the rascal hasn't killed him."

"No, sir," said the driver, getting up, and rubbing his head, "but he gived me a blow on the head, as knocked me off the horse, and I thought it best to lie still till he went away."

"Well, you are not much worse for the

accident," observed Saint Leu, laughing ; "and now let us be moving, for I wish to join my friends."

Upon this the postilion got upon his horse, and the chaise was put in motion, while Moor, who was irresistibly attracted by Sabine, rode beside her. The slow pace at which they proceeded enabled him to keep near her, and he was as much interested by her conversation as he had been struck by her beauty. At length Saint Leu, who had been a little in advance, came back and joined them.

"I am surprised, Mr. Saint Leu," observed Moor, "that you, a foreigner, should belong to any of our dissenting sects."

"Neither do I," rejoined Saint Leu. "I abhor sectarianism of every kind ; and for the liberty of worshipping my Maker according to the dictates of my conscience, I have forsaken my kindred and my country, and

abandoned most things that render life dear to me."

He had spoken this with some emotion, but presently resumed with his wonted calmness.

"Yet I have something in common with the English Dissenters. Like me, they seek liberty of conscience—like me they are the victims of persecution—and like me, they brave it. Thus we sympathize with each other; and I would rather worship with them in the open air, than in the proudest temple built by man's hands. But you are tainted with the prejudices of the University, Mr. Moor, and will deride my enthusiasm."

"I am sincerely attached to the established Church," said the young man, "but I would willingly relieve the Dissenters from all disabilities. I would leave them free to follow their own form of worship, so

long as they will do so consistently with public order."

"That is all they ask," said Saint Leu. "The meeting which takes place to-day embraces members of the most opposite persuasions, and, as we are now close to the spot, you may yourself judge of the propriety of their proceedings. I recommend you not to neglect the opportunity."

Moor was well inclined to listen to the suggestion, and a half-entreating look from Sabine decided him.

IV.

OF THE GREAT DISSENTERS' MEETING ON FINCHLEY COMMON; AND HOW IT WAS DISPERSED.

SAINT LEU'S assertion that the English Dissenters had much in common with the non-conformists of other countries, was not unfounded. Excepting only the short interval of the Commonwealth, they had for ages been subjected to the most rigorous persecution. An Act passed in 1593, during the reign of Elizabeth, inflicted the punishment of imprisonment on such persons as refused to attend the worship of the established Church, or who were present at

that of the Dissenters ; and if the offence were not atoned for, by the conformity of the delinquents within three months, the punishment was increased to transportation for life. Scarcely had Charles II. ascended the throne, after a solemn promise of liberty of conscience, when this inhuman law was declared by parliament to be still in force ; and a new act exposed the Dissenters to yet greater barbarity. By this statute, attendance at a meeting of Dissenters, where more than five persons were present, was punishable, on the third offence, with transportation for seven years to the West Indies ; and if the convicted persons should survive the period of their bondage, during which they were to serve as slaves of planters, in a climate where laborious employment could scarcely fail to be fatal to them, they incurred the punishment of death if they returned to England.

Such were the severe penalties which could be enforced, with little more than the form of trial, by a summary conviction before two magistrates, on conscientious Dissenters ; and the meanest civil officer was empowered to disperse their meetings and apprehend the preachers. This oppressive statute was subsequently repealed, but in the year 1670, another act was passed, which even improved on its cruel provisions. The pettiest constable could now consign to a dark and unwholesome dungeon, crowded with the most abandoned criminals, those pious, and often learned men, whom the Dissenters had appointed as their ministers, and who were here frequently doomed, while recoiling from the course ribaldry of their profligate companions, to suffer in body the extremities of cold and hunger.

Many of the aged ministers, we are told by Elliott, perished in prison even before

they were brought to trial ; and some estimate of the mortality among them may be formed from the declaration of William Penn, who boldly asserted at the time, that from the period of the Restoration, “more than five thousand persons had died in bonds for matters of mere conscience to God.”

There was no appearance of any assemblage on Finchley Common, but as Saint Leu and his party turned off the road on the right, they passed through a wood, and all at once came in view of numerous groups scattered over a hollow beyond it. Under cover of the thicket were ranged a number of vehicles of various kinds, together with saddle horses, and here the party alighted, and left the chaise and their steeds in the care of the postilion.

The scene around was highly picturesque. Some of the assemblage were seated on the grass partaking of a frugal meal ; others

were conversing earnestly together, in knots of three and four ; others, again, were reading aloud from the Scriptures ; while a fourth group, either from choice, or because they were unknown, stood aloof from the crowd. At another point might be observed the thriving and comfortable, though puritanical-looking citizen, with his demure dame, and buxōm daughters, in whose bright eyes a little too much of the love of the world seemed to dwell, attended by a couple of sturdy apprentices. Beside them stood an old soldier of the Civil War, who had fought with Cromwell's Ironsides ; while further on was a group of old wives from Barnet, Finchley, and Highgate, mingled with the wealthy farmer and the labourer from the field. Here and there the sober Quaker, already distinguished by his garb, conversed with the zealous Independent. In all were manifest that rigid decorum, which con-

stituted the distinctive feature of every sect of the Dissenters.

As Saint Leu and his party walked down the gentle slope, which descended from the thicket, they came abreast of a hollow tree, in which sat an old man, attired with the greatest simplicity, and having a venerable and patriarchal appearance. A large Bible lay open upon his knee, and he read forth, in a loud voice, the following words :—

“Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord! awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon?”

“Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, and the waters of the great deep: that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?”

“Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and

everlasting joy shall be upon their head ; and sorrow and lamentation shall flee away."

Saint Leu paused on seeing the old man, and whispered to Moor that it was George Fox.

The illustrious founder of the sect of Quakers was the son of a poor weaver. Apprenticed early in life to a grazier, it was, while employed in keeping sheep in the fields, that he acquired that love of solitude and contemplation, which ultimately became one of his characteristics. When only nineteen, George Fox persuaded himself that he had received a divine communication ; and from this time he supposed that a voice was continually crying to him, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition."

Abandoning both his relations and his employment, Fox now became a wanderer, rambling night and day about the country,

fasting much, and often, sitting for the day together in the trunk of a tree, and walking in the fields by night, with no other companion than the Bible. After eight years of seclusion, he first preached the strange opinions he had embraced at Manchester, whence he disseminated them, with surprising rapidity, through the whole of England. Their peculiar character exposed him to the persecution of the magistracy, and he was repeatedly committed to prison, from which, on representing his case, he was several times released by Cromwell. On the restoration of Charles II. he went to America, where he remained two years, when, returning to England, he was shortly afterwards taken into custody, and confined in Worcester gaol, but, after a long imprisonment, he was once more set at liberty. He now repaired to the continent, and, bent on disseminating his principles,

travelled through Holland and Germany, enduring incessant fatigue, and perpetual persecution, but everywhere preaching his singular opinions with boldness and effect. From this mission he had recently returned.

As he finished reading the texts cited, Fox looked up, and observing Saint Leu, slowly arose from the tree, and saluted him. It appeared they were well acquainted with each other, having met before at Amsterdam. After they had exchanged a grave and cordial greeting, Fox referred to the condition of the persecuted Huguenots.

“We are thrown in evil days,” he said, “but thou heardest the assurance of the prophet, and the wicked king shall not always triumph. Though the heathen rage against us, and the monarchs of the earth have united to oppress us, we can always look to heaven for comfort. Let us then submit

with patience to the ills which the Lord does not prevent."

"It is our duty to resign ourselves to the will of heaven," replied St. Leu; "but we should not be equally submissive to that of man. The edict of Nantes, which guaranteed toleration to the Huguenots, was a fundamental law of France, and Louis XIV. perjured himself when he revoked it. While I speak of peace, this tyrant's licentious soldiers live at free quarters in our homes. We are denied the protection of the magistrates. Our wives and daughters are left defenceless, and our own children are bribed to betray us. Our houses are destroyed or deserted; whole villages are devastated, and while driven abroad over the face of the earth, must we tamely submit to the persecutor?"

"Yea, must we," replied Fox, meekly; "we must tarry the Lord's pleasure. Let

us ever beseech Him to strengthen and comfort us; for we are as weak to endure as we are impotent to redress."

"Yet if Heaven put a sword in our hand, we should not throw it away, but rather smite with it," said St. Leu, sarcastically.

"Not so," replied Fox; "Heaven gives us the weapon for defence, and not for aggression."

At this moment they were joined by a man of tall stature, and though of great age, having a vigorous deportment and muscular limbs. His full, ruddy face glowed with health, and a reddish beard, tinged with grey, clothed his cheeks and chin. He carried in his hand a stout knotted staff, more for defence it would seem than support; while leaning on his arm was a fair, slight girl, with beautiful features, and eyes of translucent blue, though it was soon apparent, from their vacancy, that those bright

orbs were sightless. The new-comers were John Bunyan and his blind daughter, Mary.

A word of the former. Born of poor, though honest parents, Bunyan had been brought up a tinker, and had passed his early life in riot and drunkenness. He was first awakened to a sense of his errors by a woman, herself of light character, but who was so shocked by his excessive impiety, that, to his great astonishment, she reproved him for it; and, at the same time, a voice seemed to say to him, " Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? " Completely abandoning his dissolute courses, on the outbreak of the Civil War, he served as a soldier of the Parliament, and was present in several engagements. He was thirty years of age before he adopted the profession of a preacher, when he was chosen minister of a Baptist

congregation at Bedford. In 1660 he was convicted of holding an unlawful conventicle, and sentenced to perpetual banishment; but, in the mean time, he was committed to gaol, and remained in confinement upwards of twelve years. It was during this period that he wrote most of his tracts, particularly the "Pilgrim's Progress," which has since been translated into every European language. Interest having been made for him with Dr. Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, he was, through the interference of that prelate, ultimately liberated; and, since his enlargement, had passed his life in travelling from place to place, exhorting and condoling with his brethren, and the other dissenting communions, wherever he met with them.

"We were speaking of resistance to persecution," observed St. Leu to Bunyan; "is it lawful or otherwise?"

“ Assuredly it is lawful,” replied Bunyan; “ we may justly defend our freedom, whether of conscience or of body. Maccabæus was a godly man, but he went forth against the heathen; and David himself was a man of war.”

“ The dispensation of the New Testament is Peace,” answered Fox, “ and Peace shall prevail. Yea, a day shall come, when the simple Word, whether spoken or written, shall have more weight with princes and rulers than the sword hath now. We are not as the brutes, friend John, but have judgment and understanding; and men shall one day turn the sword into a ploughshare and dwell together in unity. Then shall come to pass the words of the prophet, ‘ the work of righteousness shall be Peace, and the effects of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever: and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and

in sure dwellings and in quiet resting-places.' ”

“Would that day were come, if it were the Lord’s will!” exclaimed Bunyan; “for the cruel tyranny of our present government is almost insupportable. The episcopal clergy should be looking to their own safety instead of oppressing us, for the scarlet woman of Babylon will soon ensnare them.”

“We meet in peril, but not in fear,” observed Fox.

“The Lord protect us!” ejaculated Bunyan. “Our hazard is greater than you may suppose, for a band of the Amalakites has been seen hovering about, and they probably have intelligence of our meeting.”

“More likely you have been misinformed,” remarked St. Leu. “I have come straight from London, and have seen nothing of any armed force.”

“ The spoiler cometh secretly even as a fowler spreadeth his nets,” replied Bunyan.

“ The Lord’s will be done,” said Fox. “ If it be so, I shall rejoice that I am accounted worthy to suffer.”

Bunyan turned an anxious look on his daughter.

“ I will never suffer them to lay hands upon her,” he murmured.

Meanwhile, Moor’s attention had been occupied by Sabine.

“ You have witnessed such an assemblage as this before?” he said.

“ Often in France,” she replied; “ but there we met at night—often at midnight—by stealth and in terror. Scouts were posted around to prevent surprise from the soldiers; and while we prayed, or sang, or listened to the preaching of our ministers, a warning would come suddenly that the foes

were upon us, and then such scenes would ensue as my heart bleeds to remember."

"The spirit which animated the early Christians seems to be revived among you," observed Moor; "the hapless Huguenots brave the terrors of martyrdom."

"They at least endure the utmost rigour of persecution," replied Sabine. "In our own case we were obliged to seek safety in flight, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we gained the frontiers of France, and made our way into the Low Countries. How happy are your countrymen that they can meet for worship in the broad day!"

"You are not aware, then, that these meetings are unlawful," said Moor, with a melancholy shake of the head, "and may be forcibly dispersed."

"Oh yes, I know it," replied Sabine; "but though the meetings are illegal, the law is lenient to them, and does not molest

them. If we had apprehended danger we should not have come—but see! there is a stir among the crowd. The service is about to commence.”

At this moment a man appeared on the slope, whose approach excited a general sensation, and who was saluted on all sides with a hum of welcome. Lofty in stature and slightly built, his face was pale and careworn, but marked with a touching expression of resignation. The name which rose upon the lips of the crowd was that of Richard Baxter.

Originally a minister of the established Church, Baxter, in common with many others, offended by the innovations of Laud, went over to the Dissenters, and siding with the parliament during the civil war, was appointed, after the Battle of Naseby, chaplain of Colonel Whalley’s regiment, with which he served till the close

of the struggle. He was opposed to the execution of Charles I. and to the abolition of monarchy, and, at great personal hazard, openly deprecated those proceedings, and even remonstrated against them with Cromwell. At the restoration he was appointed chaplain in ordinary to Charles II., and afterwards assisted at the ecclesiastical conference in the Savoy, where, in his capacity of commissioner, he drew up a reformed liturgy, pronounced by Dr. Johnson to be "one of the finest compositions of the ritual kind he had ever seen." He was then offered the bishopric of Hereford, but declined it, alleging as his reason his nonconformity with the church—the attempt to frame a liturgy acceptable to the Dissenters having completely failed. Retiring to Acton, he opened a meeting-house in that village, for which he was arrested by the county justices and com-

mitted to prison. He did not remain long in confinement, but ten years afterwards, having preached and published five controversial sermons, he was again arrested, and by the arbitrary exercise of a cruel statute, was heavily fined for each discourse. Finally, towards the close of 1685, being convicted of holding a conventicle, he was committed for two years to the King's Bench, and from this prison he had but recently been liberated at the period of this history.

Baxter received the congratulations of the two preachers on his enlargement with a look of heartfelt gratitude, and a faint smile illumined his pallid features.

“Let us but tarry with patience, and our deliverance is sure,” observed Fox: “the apostle Peter held fast his faith, and in the mid-watch of night the angel of the Lord visited his prison; his bonds fell from his

limbs ; the dungeon-doors flew open, and he walked forth free.”

“ The Scriptures abound with comforting examples,” replied Baxter; “ but though we have not to endure in these days the terrible persecution which beset the apostles, imprisonment is not the only evil we have to fear. Better remain for life in a dungeon, than by our words or actions bring scandal on the cause of our Master.”

“ Your own life, at least, has been blameless,” remarked Bunyan; “ resisting the temptations of prelacy, fasting often, giving alms in secret, and in all things practising holiness. Me they may reproach. My lips have blasphemed and my hand has worked iniquity, but you have ever been faithful and without guile.”

“ Would it were so !” exclaimed Baxter. “ But sinner that I have been, and am, I have escaped the greater offences,—though

my enemies accuse me of committing robbery and murder."

"Robbery and murder!" exclaimed Fox.
"Thou, Richard Baxter; thou!"

"Even I!" rejoined Baxter. Such are the crimes laid to my charge. Dr. Boreman, of Trinity College, Cambridge, avouches, that during the civil war, I killed a man in cold blood, and plundered him afterwards."

"What!" exclaimed Bunyan, sternly;
"does it not content these fiends of pre-lacy that they hunt us from place to place through the land, load us with bonds, and banish us to remote and fatal climates, but would they also vex us with their evil report? Surely the day is come when we shall no longer bear with their iniquity, and when he who hath not a sword shall sell his garment and buy him one."

"It is written in the book of Acts," said

Fox, solemnly, “that when Paul was shipwrecked, and a viper fastened on his hand, the heathen said among themselves, ‘No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. Yet Paul shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.’ Take this unto thyself, Richard Baxter. Like unto the apostle, thou shalt shake off this calumny, and thine enemies shall marvel that thou art not hurt thereby. But the Lord shall be with thee.—And now, brethren, let us pray!”

So saying, he passed slowly down the slope towards the crowd, in company with Baxter and Bunyan, and followed reverently by the others.

While the preachers were descending to the hollow, the assemblage below crowded together, and united their voices in a psalm.

Though all joined in the solemn strain, it was strange to observe what conflicting emotions it raised in the same bosoms. The stern piety of the grim Cromwellian was mingled with hatred of his oppressors, and a fanatical aversion to prelacy ; the moody citizen, less indifferent to the world's goods, or to the hazard of life or freedom, which would inevitably attend a struggle with the authorities, still with difficulty reconciled himself to the necessity of submission ; his wife, daughter, or sister, trembled with anxiety, and mourned in secret their defenceless condition ; while the stolid rustic seemed alive only to the danger of his situation, and glanced frequently and earnestly around, in continual dread of interruption.

Amidst the deep silence, which, on the close of the psalm prevailed among the multitude, the voice of Fox arose in simple

and fervent prayer. Touchingly depicting the affliction of his brethren, though acknowledging that their sins would justify a far greater measure of Divine indignation, and urging the frailty of their fallen nature as a plea for God's mercy, he implored the Almighty to lead them to submit cheerfully to His will; to strengthen them to endure their trials with patience and fortitude; to clothe them in the armour of righteousness, and to fill their hearts with love for one another, and charity towards their enemies; and concluded by beseeching the Supreme Being, for the glory of His name, to keep their minds in the knowledge of His word, and, as he ever tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, not to put more on their shoulders than they were able to bear.

Having finished his prayer, Fox was succeeded by Baxter, who, in language equally simple, and in a voice of emphatic solemnity,

offered up thanks for his recent deliverance, imploring the Deity to compassionate those who, more worthy than he was, yet pined in bondage. He adverted to the reviving power of Popery, and to the intolerance of the established Church, and prayed that, if it were the Divine will, these evils might be over-ruled, and that the saving truths of the Gospel might be again preached to all men in their own tongues.

Thus far the expressions of the preachers had been of a soothing character, calculated to allay the irritable feelings of their auditors ; but having concluded his prayer, Baxter gave way to Bunyan, who was of a warmer and more rugged nature. Mounted on a bench, which allowed his venerable figure to be seen by all, he raised his hands for a moment in inward prayer, and then, in a loud, clear voice, proceeded to address the assemblage. He took this text from Isaiah :

—“*The people shall dwell in Zion, at Jerusalem ; thou shalt weep no more ; he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, and thine eyes shall see thy teachers.*”

He represented this passage as an assurance to his brethren, in their present misery, that the Arm which they trusted would be with them, and would soon most effectually work their deliverance. But the daughter of Babylon was again seated in the high places ; and it behoved them to shut their eyes against the vanity of her beauty, to blind themselves to her scarlet robes and her jewelled crown, and to shun her snares and her soft speeches. Her mouth was comely to look upon, but an adder’s poison was within her lips ; she held out her hand

to them, grasping the cup of her idolatry; yea, she beckoned to them with her hand, but it was red with the blood of saints. They were told in the Book of Revelations, that “the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations.” They were also told, that the woman “was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs;” and would they, to escape persecution, partake of the cup she held out to them? The groans of the Lutherans in Poland, of the Huguenots in France, of the Vaudois in Savoy—the weeping and wailing of the saints through the world—warned them against her; and, in their own land, they saw her in league with their oppressors, laying hands on the chosen, and committing them to prison. The preacher was torn

from his flock, the father from his children, the son from his parents: they were buried in dungeons, rank with the breath of crime, or carried away into captivity, like the ancient Israelites, to work in bonds for cruel taskmasters. But the day was approaching, when the scarlet woman would turn on their persecutors: then the latter would entreat them kindly, and would draw near to them, and would seek to be as one with them in that day. But they would not be as one with the prelatists — they would accept no aid from Egypt or Babylon; they would put their trust only in the mercy of their Maker. There would soon be a lighting down of the arm of the Lord; a cheerful noise of trumpets and of timbrels, announcing their tribulation to be at an end. Then their stone of adversity would be changed into bread of comfort; their water of affliction into a sweet spring; their teach-

ers, released from bonds, would not be removed into a corner any more, and they should ever see them among them.

It was with fixed and almost breathless attention—with faces alternately flushing or growing pale, and with hearts swelling or subdued—that the crowd listened to this discourse. The rude eloquence of the speaker was admirably suited to the disposition of his auditors. They had, however, at that moment, but little time to brood over his discourse ; for scarcely had he brought it to a close, when a horseman galloped down the hollow, in whom Moor instantly recognised the Golden Farmer.

“Fly!” exclaimed the highwayman. “The devil is abroad. Colonel Kirke is at hand. He and his ‘Lambs’ will be down upon you directly.”

Without tarrying to witness the effect of his warning, the Golden Farmer again

clapped spurs to his horse, rode up the acclivity, and disappeared.

The reported approach of the dragoons spread alarm among the crowd, and a few of the country-folk, of both sexes, exhibited a disposition to retreat, but the mass of the devotees, whom Bunyan's discourse had already inflamed against the authorities, remained steadfast, while murmurs of resentment broke from them.

"I would my sword were girded on my thigh, like the man of Barak's," said Ephraim Ruddle, a superannuated Ironside, "I would make a stand against Moab, and he should fly like Sisera."

"'T would be shameful in us to submit," said Gideon Tuck, an earthenware maker, "but what can potters' vessels, like us, do against hands of iron?"

"We can do nothing but fly," said a pretty damsel, who was leaning on his arm;

“so let us run off to the waggon, and hide ourselves.”

“Don’t be frightened, Miss Deborah,” urged a sturdy young fellow near her. “The ’prentices made better men flee before them, when they forced King Charles to raise the siege of Gloucester.”

“Yonder are the Philistines!” shouted old Martha Higgins, a stern enthusiast from Barnet. “I see ’em comin’, like wolves to devour the flock. The hand of the Lord be upon ’em and turn ’em back, like Sennacherib, when he fled in the night from before the walls of Jerusalem, in the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah.”

At this juncture, a strong detachment of troopers was seen to wheel round one end of the neighbouring thicket, while a second party made its appearance simultaneously from the other side. They approached the hollow at a brisk trot, with their swords

drawn; and now the female portion of the crowd gave free utterance to their terror, increasing the confusion by their outcries.

An attentive observer of all that passed, though little anticipating such a termination to the proceedings, Moor looked round for Sabine, intending to offer her protection; but he found that, in the confusion, he had become separated both from her and Saint Leu. Before he could discover where they were, the first party of troopers poured down among the crowd, and amidst fearful cries, mingled with their own coarse jests and laughter, began the task of dispersion. While this was going on, their leader, Colonel Trelawney, dashed up to the three preachers.

As he advanced, his glance fell on Mary Bunyan, and, stooping in his saddle, he placed his arm round her waist.

“Why, my pretty lass, what are you

doing here?" he cried. "You 're far too good-looking for a conventicle. We will go to church together."

"Let her go, spawn of Tophet!" exclaimed Bunyan, raising his staff.

Fox seized his arm, and at the same moment, Moor, who was standing by, drew Mary away.

"Do not let him tempt thee," said Fox to Bunyan; "the Lord will requite him."

"Ah! is there a wrestling within thee to hold forth?" cried Trelawney, jeeringly. "Keep it in, Broadbrim, for verily thou wilt need all thy doctrine for thyself."

"The Lord will be with me in my need," rejoined Fox, calmly; "and do thou remember what befel to Hophni and Phineas, and do no more wrong to thy brethren."

Trelawney was about to make an insulting reply, when the leader of the other party of dragoons came up.

The personal appearance of Colonel Kirke (for he it was) was in keeping with his well-known ferocious character. Tall and gaunt in figure, with sharp, stern features, lighted up by eyes that seemed injected with blood; and bronzed by the suns of Africa, his naturally savage appearance was heightened by a wide cicatrice on his left cheek, occasioned by a wound he had received in a conflict with the Moors at Tangier. In this formidable personage—hideous by nature as well as hideous by crime—few could trace any resemblance to his sister, the lively and beautiful Mary Kirke, the Warmestre of Grammont. The barbarous character of the warfare in which Kirke had been engaged while in garrison at Tangier, had aggravated the natural ferocity of his disposition, and he found a fiendish gratification in the most refined acts of cruelty. His atrocities in the West of England, on the sup-

pression of Monmouth's rebellion, have already been mentioned. On one occasion, he tied a miserable wretch by a rope to a horse's neck, promising him life on condition of his keeping pace with the horse, at full speed, for the distance of half-a-mile, and executed the wretched man in spite of his performance of the task. On another occasion, he ordered a number of his prisoners to be brought out and put to death, while he and his troopers drank the king's health; and observing his men tremble with fear, he directed the trumpets to sound, telling them, with a diabolical laugh, that they should have music to their dancing. A vile scoffer of religion, though professedly a member of the Church, he was once urged by James to embrace the Catholic faith, when he told the monarch that during his sojourn in Africa, he had promised the Emperor of Morocco, if he ever changed his religion, he

would become a Mahometan, and he could not break his word. Such were the terrible pleasantries in which this atrocious jester indulged.

As Kirke reined in his horse, he raised a finger to his hat, which, like the hats of all his men, was decorated with the figure of a white lamb (a badge he had assumed at Tangier), and which, in derision of his pretension to Christian virtue, had procured his regiment the nickname of "Colonel Kirke's Lambs."

"The lambs have come into the fold," he cried, "and seek the shepherd."

"I will leave you to deal with the shepherds, Kirke," laughed Trelawney, "for I see a flying doe yonder, whom I should like to capture."

With this he spurred his horse towards the further end of the thicket, where he had just espied Sabine.

“Aha!” he muttered to himself, as he cleared the ground,—this is lucky! It is the very girl that Barillon pointed out to me. Her abduction can now be accomplished without exciting the slightest suspicion.”

Kirke, meanwhile, remained stationary. Seeing which, Baxter advanced towards him, saying, “Thou hast asked for the shepherd. Behold an unworthy one in me.”

“And another in me,” said Bunyan.

“Friend, I am the man thou seekest,” interposed Fox. “I will teach thy hands to throw away the sword of Belial, and to renounce thy carnal-mindedness and world-seeking.”

“For which I shall tie thee to a cart’s tail,” rejoined Kirke. And he turned to another horseman in the garb of a civilian, who had accompanied him to the spot. “Secure these three ringleaders, Master

Constable," he said, "and my troopers will disperse the mob."

The troopers, indeed, were already actively engaged in this service; but a few of the crowd now rallied round the preachers, and, by their looks and murmurs, seemed disposed to offer resistance.

"The Lord slew Holofernes by the hand of a woman," exclaimed Ephraim Ruddle.

"He will make us strong against Moab."

"Peace, peace!" cried Fox.

"Take my daughter, Mr. Ellwood," said Bunyan to a tall thin man in the garb of a Quaker, "and the Father of the fatherless will requite you."

As the friend and amanuensis of Milton took charge of the poor blind girl, Moor turned to retire. Before he could clear the hollow, however, he attracted the notice of the constable, who was no other than Elkanah Snewin. Though he had not found

Moor in conference with Colonel Sidney at the Burleigh Arms inn, as he expected, Snewin had not dismissed his suspicions on that point, and Moor's presence among the Dissenters confirmed him in the belief that he was engaged in some political intrigue. Actuated by this suspicion, he now darted forward and laid hands upon him.

"Not so fast, my blade!" he cried. "What are you doing here, eh?"

Moor made no reply, but, mustering all his strength, cast off the powerful hold of Snewin, and threw him down. In the struggle, however, Snewin tore open his coat, and the letter he had received from Colonel Sidney dropped from his vest.

Snewin instantly seized the letter, and his eyes gleamed with triumph as he glanced at the seal. Scrambling to his feet he again seized Moor by the collar.

“Charles Moor,” he cried, “I arrest you of high treason! It is the private signet of the Prince of Orange, I know it well,” he added to Kirke.

V.

SABINE.

SEPARATED from her uncle and Madame Desjardins in the confusion and terror occasioned by the troopers' approach, Sabine had gained, she scarcely knew how, the summit of the slope, and then became aware that her companions were gone. Her first impulse prompted her again to rush into the hollow in quest of her uncle; but the scared fugitives who covered the slope, compelled her to turn back, and she fled onwards the wood. At this moment, Tre-

lawney dashed up the acclivity with the evident design of seizing her. Outstripping the other scattered fugitives—with a panting heart, trembling, and almost breathless, Sabine cleared the outer extremity of the thicket, closely pursued by Trelawney, whose progress, however, was suddenly arrested by half-a-dozen men armed with bludgeons, the stoutest of whom caught his horse by the bridle, while the others surrounded him, and threatened to dismount him. Taking advantage of the interruption, Sabine plunged into the heart of the thicket, until unable to proceed further, she stood still, and half-sinking with terror, supported herself against a tree. Though the brush-wood and timber were here so thick that no external object could be distinguished, she still heard the shouts of the dragoons, and the trampling of their horses' feet, mixed with the rumbling of carts and waggons,

while every now and then an outcry, proceeding from some terrified female, made her heart beat more anxiously. This turmoil lasted upwards of an hour, after which all became still, and she began to think that the assemblage was dispersed, and the soldiers gone.

Evening was by this time advancing, but absorbed by her fears, and scarcely venturing even to raise her head, Sabine hardly noticed the deeper gloom gradually falling around her. As the prevailing stillness, however, continued undisturbed, she was roused to the necessity of exertion, and resolved to make an effort to gain the road, where, if her uncle were really hovering about, as she hoped he might be, she would most likely fall in with him.

She was stepping forth with this view, when a rustling in the bushes, as if some one were pushing through them, held her

still. Footsteps were distinctly heard at a little distance; and she became sensible that several persons were approaching. Were they friends or foes?—It was impossible to say. Should she fly or remain where she was, when the next moment she might be captured? She was torn by indecision, but her fears were confirmed by the voice of one of the searchers.

“Never mind, sergeant,” said the speaker, in a low tone; “it seems useless to beat the bush further. Keep a strict watch round the thicket, and I and Cornet Lucas will go lower down, near the road.”

“It shall be done, colonel,” answered his companion.

“Post your men carefully,” resumed the other; “recollect, if you take her, you will be well rewarded.”

“Make yourself easy colonel,” replied

the sergeant; "you shall have her before the night is over."

Sabine with difficulty repressed a cry, while the men moved off in opposite directions.

When all was quite still, she rose from her crouching position, and endeavoured to peer through the darkness, but could distinguish nothing except the vague outlines of the trees and bushes, while every gust of wind that swept past startled her, as if it proclaimed the approach of an enemy. Afraid to leave her covert, she did not dare to remain stationary, while her knowledge that the thicket was guarded added to her perplexity. Some time elapsed before she could decide how to act. She then mustered all her resolution, and, breaking through the bush, endeavoured to gain the open Common.

The difficulty of achieving a passage was

increased by the darkness, but at length she reached a spot of sward, clear of brush-wood, and she was hurrying across it, when the sound of an approaching footstep brought her to a sudden halt.

Immediately before her she discerned the figure of a sentinel, moving along at a slow and measured pace, and pausing every moment to listen, and look around. He was so close to her, that she almost feared he had detected her, but she was shielded from his view by an intervening tree, and, as he did not advance, she hoped she might still elude discovery. The man turned to retrace his steps; and, observing a gap in the bushes, Sabine made swiftly towards it, and gained the Common.

By this time the moon had risen, though at the moment she was obscured by clouds, which rolled over the sky in dense masses. The turf of the Common was heavy

with dew; the wind sighed fitfully, and swept past in hoarse, mournful gusts.

Sabine hurried on for some little way without interruption, till, skirting an extensive hollow, she was alarmed by the sound of voices, and, looking in the direction of the sound, perceived the outlines of three or four gipsies' tents with a fire in front of them, round which some wild-looking figures were grouped. Probably she might have passed these persons unnoticed, if a dog had not commenced barking, and ultimately started in pursuit of her. The gipsies instantly set up a cry, and followed the animal. Sabine continued her flight without looking behind her; but though terror lent wings to her feet, the foremost of her pursuers was speedily up with her. Before he could lay hands upon her, however, two horsemen galloped up, and one of them, who was no other than Colonel Tre-

lawney, dealing a blow at the gipsy, seized Sabine, and drawing her to his saddle, wrapped his cloak around her so as to stifle her cries, and then, attended by his companion, rode off.

After proceeding at a rapid pace for some time, Trelawney alighted before a large straggling building, half-farm, half-inn, on the road-side. Almost insensible, Sabine was borne into the house by her captor, while his companion took upon him to explain matters to the landlord, who was busy with other guests, but who, hearing their arrival, had hurried out to welcome them.

The principal room of the inn was of considerable size, and but dimly lighted. While depositing Sabine on a bench, Trelawney perceived that another person was standing near the fire-place. It was a young man, rather under the middle height, but richly habited, and of a haughty bear-

ing. His head seemed disproportionately large for his body, and his features, though handsome, had a strange sinister expression.

“Lord Mauvesin!” exclaimed Trelawney, in surprise. “What has brought your lordship here?”

“Accident,” replied the other. “I might put a similar question to you, colonel. But who is this girl?” he added, glancing at Sabine.

“A prize I’ve taken at the Dissenters’ meeting,” replied Trelawney, laughing. “She is much too pretty to be left with those canting dogs.”

“She is remarkably beautiful,” replied Mauvesin; “but will you not call for assistance? She has fainted.”

“Oh, she’ll soon come to, I’ll warrant her,” replied Trelawney. “What ho, hostess! take charge of this young lady.

She has had a hurried ride, and is rather the worse for it."

Thus summoned, a stout, good-humoured woman made her appearance, and seeing the condition of Sabine, uttered a cry, and disappearing for a moment, returned with some restoratives, which she applied with great zeal and solicitude to the fair sufferer.

Leaving Sabine in the care of the latter, Trelawney walked towards the fire with Lord Mauvesin.

"Do you know who this girl is, Trelawney?" asked the latter, in a low tone.

"I do," replied the other, "but I must not disclose her name."

"Why not?"

"Nay, the secret is another's, not mine," said Trelawney. "Thus much I will tell you. She is from France, and is about to be conveyed back to her native country."

“ She shall not be so if I can prevent it,” replied Mauvesin. “ I am strongly attracted by her, Trelawney. Cannot I make it worth your while to yield her to me ? ”

“ I would strike a bargain with you if I could, my lord,” said Trelawney, laughing, “ but I cannot. I am under an engagement to Barillon. The girl is destined to a convent. It ’s a sad pity—but it must be.”

“ I tell you it must *not* be, Trelawney,” cried Mauvesin, hastily. “ A thousand pounds if you surrender her to me.”

“ Hum ! ” exclaimed Trelawney. “ My word is pledged to Barillon.”

“ Pshaw ! you can easily make excuses to him,” cried the nobleman. “ But who is this ? Another arrival ! ”

The exclamation was occasioned by the sound of horses’ feet outside, and both Mauvesin and Trelawney became silent, ex-

pecting the appearance of a new-comer. As this did not immediately occur, however, Mauvesin again spoke.

“Do you accept my offer?” he asked.

“I will consider of it, my lord,” replied Trelawney.

At this juncture the door opened, and a square-built man, in the habit of a farmer, with great funnel-topped boots rising above his knees, and a green riding coat wrapped about his athletic frame, entered the room. Walking forward to a small table near the fire-place, with a “give ye good e’en” to the gentlemen, he sat down, and called for a can of ale and a pipe.

As the farmer entered, Mauvesin and Trelawney regarded him attentively for a moment, and seemed somewhat disconcerted at his intrusion.

“Come, I see you assent to my proposal, colonel,” said Mauvesin, in an under tone

to Trelawney, "and as an earnest of my sincerity, accept this pocket-book. It contains five hundred pounds. We must get off the girl at once, and I have hit on a good plan of doing it. She shall think I intend to aid her to escape. I will just say a word to her apart, and, meanwhile, do you examine the contents of the pocket-book."

As Trelawney, in obedience to these instructions, turned to the fire, Mauvesin advanced to Sabine. The farmer chancing to raise his head at the moment, saw Trelawney count the roll of notes, and then thrust them, with a look of satisfaction, into his vest.

"Are you going towards Highgate, sir?" the farmer inquired.

"Why do you ask, friend?" said Trelawney, sternly.

"Only because it's my road home," replied

the other; "and I should be glad of your honour's company."

"You look too much like a highwayman yourself, fellow, to fear molestation," replied Trelawney. "But if you can tell me where to find the 'Golden Farmer,' I'll go with you."

"You 'd better leave him alone, sir," said the farmer; "but if you' re bent upon it, I might put you in the way of finding him."

"Do so," replied Trelawney, "and I'll pay you for your trouble."

"You *shall* pay me well if I do," muttered the farmer, puffing away at his pipe.

Meanwhile, Mauvesin had joined Sabine, who was now restored to sensibility. The hostess had just quitted her, so that she was left alone. She looked up as the young nobleman approached, and raising his finger to his lips to enjoin silence, he cast a hasty glance behind him, as if to

make sure he was not observed by Trelawney, and then said, in a hasty whisper—

“I am aware of your situation, young lady, and will do my best to extricate you from it. Will you place yourself under my protection?”

“Most thankfully,” replied Sabine, reassured by his manner.

“Then I will slip out and procure a horse for you,” returned Mauvesin; “after which I will contrive some means of getting you away.”

The farmer looked round as he retired; but continued smoking his pipe tranquilly, while Trelawney gazed into the fire. Thus several minutes passed by, when a loud report of fire-arms was heard close to the windows.

Sabine uttered an exclamation of terror.

“Hallo—what ’s that?” exclaimed the farmer, starting to his feet.

Trelawney rushed to the nearest window, while the farmer went quickly up to Sabine.

“That door will lead you to the yard,” he said to her, “there is a gate on the other side. Gain the road, and you are safe. Fly—fly!” he cried, seeing her hesitate. “I’ll keep the colonel at bay.”

Trelawney heard the last words, and instantly divining what was passing, darted towards Sabine, who arose on his approach, and made towards the door indicated by the farmer, while the latter threw himself in the colonel’s way.

“Let her go!” he exclaimed. “What has she done?”

“Out of my way, rascal, or I’ll cut you down,” cried Trelawney, furiously.

“No you won’t,” replied the farmer, drawing a pistol, and levelling it at the

other's head. "You don't stir a step, colonel!"

"You shall repent this, villain," shouted Trelawney. "What ho, house! where the devil is Lord Mauvesin?"

"Gone to help the young lady to escape," laughed the farmer.

Sabine, meanwhile, pursued her flight unmolested. On gaining the yard, she encountered Lord Mauvesin, who was hastily crossing from a stable on the other side.

"I was just coming for you, young lady," he said, "when I was alarmed by those pistol shots, and have vainly tried to ascertain by whom they were fired. They are now bringing out the horses. We will pass through this gate to the road, and in a few minutes you will be in safety."

Almost as he spoke, indeed, an ostler, with a lantern in his hand, brought up a

couple of horses, one of which was furnished with a side-saddle. After a word of explanation, Sabine suffered Mauvesin to lift her to the saddle, and to lead her horse into the farm-yard. As they approached the outer gate, Mauvesin, unobserved by Sabine, directed the ostler to acquaint Trelawney of their departure ; and then, mounting his horse, he and Sabine passed on to the road, and set forward together in the direction for London.

They had not, however, proceeded a hundred yards from the inn, when another horseman, who had been hovering about, rode up to them, and Sabine, to her great joy, found it was her uncle.

A few hasty exclamations passed between them, when Saint Leu, turning to his niece's companion, recognised Lord Mauvesin.

“I owe my safety to this gentleman, uncle,” replied Sabine.

“I am but too happy to have rendered you a service,” observed Mauvesin, recovering from his surprise and confusion. “If I can be of any further assistance, I will willingly accompany you to town.”

Saint Leu gave a reluctant assent, and they proceeded on their way.

Meanwhile, the ostler, whom Mauvesin had left at the gate of the inn, with a message for Trelawney, heard a hue and cry in the yard behind, and saw the farmer approaching.

He was closely pursued by Trelawney and his companion, with several waggoners and stable-men, but the ostler, who might have intercepted him, made way for him to pass, and he gained the road. There he mounted a horse, which was tied to a tree

at a little distance, and instantly galloped off.

The sound of his horse's hoofs could still be heard when his pursuers gained the road.

"He has escaped us for the present, cried Trelawney, "but I will have him some other time. Gallop off to the thicket, Cornet, and bring up the men. Meanwhile, I 'll look after Lord Mauvesin and the girl."

"The lady's gone, sir," said the ostler, touching his hat. "The lord told me to let you know he'd see her safe home."

"Oh, that 's all right," answered Trelawney.

Returning to the inn, he partook of some refreshment, and then, mounting his horse, rode off towards Highgate.

He proceeded at a leisurely pace, but was soon out of sight of the inn, making his

way along a lonely road overshadowed with trees. With his thoughts engrossed by recent occurrences, he had ridden along for some distance, scarcely taking note of his progress, when he was suddenly confronted by another horseman.

"Stand and deliver!" cried the latter, presenting a pistol at his head.

"Soh, you *are* a highwayman, then?" cried Trelawney, recognising the farmer. "I thought as much."

"I am the man you wished to meet—the 'Golden Farmer,'" rejoined the other.

"Then this shall end your career," cried Trelawney.

And snatching a pistol from his holster, he drew the trigger. Sparks blazed from the flint, but that was all. He drew a second pistol with the same result.

A loud laugh broke from the highwayman.

“Your pistols were discharged near the inn-window,” he said. “A comrade did it for me to distract you. But come, colonel, hand out your pocket-book, or you ’ll find that my pistols *are* loaded.”

“Take it,” answered Trelawney, drawing forth his pocket-book, “and may the devil’s luck go with it.”

“It has come into my hands quite as honestly as it got into yours, colonel,” replied the other. “Good night, and a pleasant ride to you.”

And turning his horse’s head, he galloped away.

VI.

A PRISON SCENE.

WITHIN a few hours after the meeting on Finchley Common, Moor and his fellow-prisoners, Fox, Baxter, and Bunyan, were the inmates of Newgate. Accident having led to their joint arrest, they were lodged for the time in the same dungeon, where they were packed together with a crowd of offenders, accused of almost every shade of crime.

The interior of the prisons, at this eventful period, teemed with such horrors, that, as

as a learned writer observes, "they surpassed the imaginations of more civilized times," and can only be estimated correctly from the stern facts of history. Subject to no regulation, and without any provision for affording sustenance to the prisoners, the places of confinement were at once the scenes of profusion and famine. It was publicly stated in parliament, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second, that "needy persons committed to gaol, many times perished before their trial." While some died of hunger, or actually perished from cold, others revelled in continual debauchery. It was not unusual to leave the mouldering bodies of those who died, in all the torments of despair, for days together in the dark and loathsome dungeons of the survivors.

The description given by George Fox of the treatment he experienced in the horrible

pit at Launceston, called Doomsdale, excites a feeling amounting to awe. Ellwood, the amanuensis of Milton, when confined in Newgate for his religion, saw the quarters of men executed for treason lying for several days close to his cell, and the hangman and the more obdurate criminals playing at bowls with the heads. The gaolers exercised an almost unlimited power over the prisoners; and such was the deplorable state of the laws, that persons were often incarcerated for no other offence than being obnoxious to one of the magistracy. Thus disposed of, they were soon forgotten, and if they even succeeded in obtaining a trial it was easy to accuse them of nonconformity, and then to prevail on a packed jury to find them guilty.

The dreadful mortality which took place in the prisons has already been referred to; but when the gaol-fever once broke out, bringing to the despairing captives the often

welcome relief of death, the contagion was not confined to those fearful abodes, but spread far and wide over the land. When the prisoners were brought up for trial at the assizes, it came forth with them into the court, and fell like a pestilence on the judges, jurors, barristers, and audience. Even those acquitted at their trial, or who purchased their liberty by the payment of fines, were liberated with impaired constitutions, and never wholly recovered from the effect of their confinement.

The Dissenters suffered most severely from this atrocious system ; and besides the great mortality it occasioned among them, we learn from a tract of William Penn's, called, " Good Advice to the Church of England," that by the operation of the cruel laws enacted against them, " fifteen thousand families were ruined." Among those who died was William Jenkins, a celebrated non-

conformist preacher, whose son, on hearing of his death, distributed mourning-rings among his friends, on which was inscribed, "William Jenkins, murdered in Newgate." Young Jenkins afterwards joined the army of Monmouth ; and in spite of the repeated intercesssions of Sunderland, attested by a letter in the State Paper Office, dated 12th September, 1685, was ordered by Jeffreys to be executed.

After passing a night in the midst of such horrors as those described, with all that was loathsome and hideous around him, Moor, who was stretched near the door of the dungeon, was aroused by the entrance of a turnkey bearing a torch, which threw a lurid light over the dark walls, glistening with moisture, and over the haggard faces of the prisoners, some of whom were stretched on the ground, while others were in the act of rising. The turnkey was

followed by two assistants carrying large tin mess-kettles and cans, in which was the gaol allowance for the prisoners' breakfasts.

"I suppose it's no use asking if you are all here?" inquired the turnkey gruffly.

"You'd better call the roll," observed a discarded drummer, who was awaiting his trial for robbery.

"He'd be like Glendower in the play, then," said Tom Booth, a player, under confinement for debt. "You may call rolls or loaves here till you're hoarse, but none come."

"Friend, thou art lost in the vanity of plays and mummings," remarked a Quaker. "Eschew these snares of Satan, and I will shew thee the living bread."

"Better keep your bread for yourself, Broadbrim," cried the turnkey, "for you're likely to have a short allowance to-day. What do you say, Doctor Oates?"

His concluding words were addressed to a very singular-looking man, who, on his entry, had risen from a litter of straw to his feet. He was of low stature and very ill-shaped, and had so short a neck that his head seemed to grow out of his body. His mouth was in the centre of his face, and a circle described with a compass from his lips, would include in its diameter his nose, forehead, and chin.

By the pretended discovery of a Popish plot, in 1678, Titus Oates had for a time diffused among the Catholics, and even the stricter members of the Church of England, a universal feeling of terror. The son of an Anabaptist preacher, during the civil war, he had been chaplain to the notorious Colonel Pride, the hero of the stratagem known as "Pride's Purge;" but he had conformed to the Church of England at the Restoration, and taken holy orders. As a

reward for the discovery of the plot, he was assigned a lodging in Whitehall, and a pension of £1200 per annum ; and, by the direction of the House of Commons, he walked about with guards, lest he should be murdered by the Papists. He was called the saviour of the nation ; and whoever he pointed at was taken up and committed. Although his revelations, when examined before the Council, teemed with the most glaring blunders, the panic he had excited was so general, that no one dared to call attention to their absurdity. He spoke of Don Juan as having declared he would kill the King ; and being asked what kind of man Don Juan was, he said that he was a tall black man. Charles II., who presided at the examination, on hearing the answer, laughed in his face, for he was personally acquainted with Don Juan, who was a short man with red hair. The audacity of

Oates was unbounded; and, during the heat of the plot, he even had the effrontery to appear at the bar of the House of Commons, in his canonicals, crying out, in his peculiar vernacular, "Aye, Taitus Oates, accuse Catherine, Queen of England, of haigh treason." Charles was so indignant at this insult, that he immediately put him in confinement; but was compelled, by the clamours of the populace, to set him at liberty. The careless monarch seems to have completely shaken off his usual inertness on this occasion. "They think," he said, "I have a mind to a new wife, but, for all that, I will not see an innocent woman abused." But, though the queen was spared, an immense number of persons were condemned on the impeachments of Oates, and executed as traitors. The last victim was the unfortunate Stafford, who was beheaded on the 29th of December, 1680, in spite of the most

powerful interposition in his favour. Five years afterwards, James II. ascended the throne, and Titus Oates was convicted of perjury. Ejected from his lodging in Whitehall, and deprived of his pension, he was sentenced to be imprisoned for life in Newgate, whence he was to be taken five times a year to the pillory, and then whipped through the streets from Newgate to Tyburn.

The miscreant laughed heartily at the observation of the turnkey.

“If he hays gaut sau mauch brayd, he con gayve me hays raytion,” he said, in his broad accents. “This lawdging of yaurs is a fayne playce, mayster gaoler, and gayves me a hooge appetite.”

“Friend, thou art in error,” observed Fox. “It is written that ‘man shall not live by bread alone;’ and, verily, friend Barclay can tell thee of the true bread,

which is free from the leaven of the world, even as the shewbread of the temple."

"Turn from lying and evil speaking," cried Bunyan, "and fight the fiend within you, as Christian fought with the fiend Apollyon, in the Valley of Humiliation. Then shall your burden become light, and you shall find even this Slough of Despond like a fair and pleasant mountain."

"Daw yau da-are to prate to me, yau ra-anting dogs?" roared Oates. "Daw yau know aye awm Dauctor Taytus Oates, the sawviour of this nawtion?"

"Perjurer and murderer!" shouted a high-churchman, who had been committed for sedition.

"Stand to your text, doctor," laughed the turnkey. "You shall fight it out before you have any breakfast. Ho! a ring for the doctor!"

"The doctor's a very Achilles in war,"

cried a Grub-street writer, recently convicted for libel. "He's like the saints in 'Hudibras,' who

" Prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks."

" Let him play out his part," said Booth. And throwing himself into a theatrical attitude, he added,

" Lay on, Macduff!
And d—d be he who first cries ' Hold ! enough. ' "

" A ring ! a ring ! " cried several voices.

Obedient to this summons, the prisoners were grouping round the two disputants, when a tall, thin man, with long black hair streaming over his face, darted into the midst of them. The light of the torch fell full on his piercing eyes and meagre features, displaying a countenance marked with the sternest lines of fanaticism.

“Curse on you!” he screamed. “The words out of my mouth shall devour you, and smite you with everlasting fire.”

Moor regarded the speaker with amazement.

“Is this a madman?” he asked of Baxter, who was sitting next to him.

“Either a madman or a blasphemer,” answered Baxter. “It is Ludowick Muggleton.”

Muggleton had not even the melancholy excuse for his blasphemy, which Baxter was half-inclined to concede to him. Originally a tailor, he joined, in 1657, a brother craftsman named Reeves, in the more profitable vocation of a religious impostor. Reeves declared that they were the two last witnesses mentioned in Revelations, and that whoever opposed them in the spiritual and heavenly mission they were intrusted with, would be destroyed by the “fire,” or curses

that would "proceed out of their mouths." Reeves was to act the part of Moses, and Muggleton was to be his "mouth." Reeves affirmed, in his "New Testament," that our Lord had addressed him in these words: "I have given thee understanding of my mind in the Scriptures above all men in the world. I have chosen thee, my last messenger, for a great work unto this bloody unbelieving world; and I have given thee Ludowick Muggleton to be thy mouth."

On the death of Reeves, Muggleton pretended to have a double portion of the spirit resting on him, and became very active in diffusing his tenets, which, attracting the notice of the authorities, at last led to his prosecution. He was tried at the Old Bailey on the 17th of January, 1677, and, making no defence, was convicted of having published several blasphemous pamphlets, and sentenced to be placed three times in

the pillory, and imprisoned till he could procure sureties for his future good behaviour.

Muggleton's address elicited a burst of laughter from his auditors.

“Thou shouldst not curse at all, friend,” remarked Fox. “Cease to do evil, learn to do well, and the Lord shall deliver thee out of the hands of Pharaoh, and out of the house of bondage. But I speak unto ye all, as Jeremiah spake unto the Hebrews: ‘They harkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck; they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them, but they will not hearken unto thee: thou shalt also call unto them, but they will not answer thee.’”

“I’ll answer for one,” cried the drummer, in a snuffling voice.

Another loud laugh broke from the au-

dience. Before it subsided, the door of the dungeon was again opened, and Elkanah Snewin presented himself at it. He was somewhat better habited than usual, having encased his sturdy person in a coat of quilted orange-coloured cloth, and his lower limbs in a pair of buff boots ascending above the knee, while a hanger was girded to his side.

“Turn up Charles Moor,” cried the constable, “I’ve got a warrant to take him before the Privy Council.”

Moor was immediately called by the turn-key, and, taking a hasty leave of Baxter, the young man was consigned to the custody of Snewin. The latter received him with a grin of triumph; and hurrying him into a coach at the prison-door, conveyed him to Whitehall.

VII.

THE QUEEN-CONSORT.

MARY OF MODENA'S charms had been long a favourite theme with the poets of the age. She was now in the meridian of her beauty; and fully merited the praises so lavishly bestowed upon her. Still her lovely countenance was

“ Sicklied o'er with the pale hue of thought,”

as, indeed, had too often been the case since

her consort's accession to the throne. Her luxuriant hair was turned up from the forehead in a sort of pile, or high top-knot, but fell in ringlets over the temples, where its jetty hue contrasted admirably with the marble paleness of her complexion, while it was in keeping with her dark lustrous eyes, celebrated by Lord Lansdown in one of his poetical epistles, as—

“Those charming eyes, which shine to reconcile
To harmony and peace our stubborn isle.”

Descended from the illustrious house of Este, Mary had, early in life, on the death of her father, Alphonso the Fourth, Duke of Modena, been adopted by Louis the Fourteenth, who settled on her a marriage-portion of two hundred thousand pounds. When in her fifteenth year, she was married at Modena to James, then Duke of York—Henry Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough,

being proxy for the duke, and afterwards conducting her to England. As Mary was a Catholic, the marriage was very unpopular at the time; but her agreeable manners, the innocence and goodness of her nature, and her obliging and unassuming deportment, soon overcame the prejudices raised against her by her religion, and moved even the sectarian Marvel to exclaim—

“ Poor princess ! born beneath a sullen star,
To find such welcome when you came from far !
Better some jealous neighbour of your own
Had call'd you to a sound though petty throne,” *

Her graceful behaviour, however, could not conciliate the ill-will of her adversaries; and Burnet relates that, “so artfully did the young Italian behave herself, that she deceived even the oldest and most jealous

* Advice to a Painter.

persons, both in the court and country : only sometimes a satirical temper broke out too much, which was imputed to youth and wit, not enough practised in the world." Yet this young princess—so lovely, so inexperienced, and so friendless—brought almost a child into the giddy vortex of a profligate court, was, as the bishop admits, "universally esteemed and beloved," and while her husband was continually engaging in some low intrigue, devoted herself patiently to the fulfilment of her duties as a wife. When James was sent as a kind of exile into Scotland, in 1679, he himself testifies to her exemplary conduct ; for, though pressed by Charles II. to remain at court, "she chose rather," James says, "even with the hazard of her life, to be a constant companion of the duke her husband's misfortunes and hardships, than to enjoy her ease in any part of the world without him."

Though her influence over her husband had daily increased, Mary did not interfere in public affairs till after her elevation to the throne; and since that event, though she had been more than ever surrounded by ghostly counsellors, and though her interest and inclination alike prompted her to leave no means untried to re-establish Popery in England, she had almost uniformly raised her voice in favour of moderate measures. This line of conduct subjected her to frequent reproof from the priests, and especially from Father Petre, who, with the subtle craft of his order, worked so effectually on her deep feelings of religion, that he sometimes won her support for proceedings otherwise obnoxious to her.

In a chamber at Whitehall sat Mary, near a small table of massive oak, richly carved and polished, with her favourite attendant, Anna Montecuculi, a beautiful but artful

Italian, standing beside her. Anna was the daughter of the well-known Imperial general, and having been brought up from infancy with the queen, possessed great influence over her. But at this moment Mary scarcely seemed aware of her proximity. She was leaning over an open missal emblazoned with the illuminations of the previous century; but her eye wandered from her book to the wall, where hung gems of Titian and Murillo, with some sacred pieces of Bassano, or rested a moment on a neighbouring oriel window, encircled with the carving of Gibbons, and where a devotional stool, a small shrine, and a crucifix might be discerned. A rich Turkey carpet covered the centre of the floor; a chess-board lay neglected on the table; several Indian screens and tall China jars were dispersed round the room; and on one side glittered an exquisite cabinet of filagree silver.

Mary had been sitting thus for some time, when the chamber door was opened by a page.

"The Earl of Sunderland is in the ante-chamber," he said, with an obeisance, "and requests an audience of your Majesty."

Mary hesitated. As she was about to speak, Anna came behind her chair, and Mary looked up.

"I must tell his Lordship my decision," she said to Anna, in a low voice; "Father Petre cannot object to that. No, no, I must see him."

Anna bowed; but, though affecting resignation, she did not appear satisfied.

"Admit his Lordship," said Mary to the page.

With another profound obeisance, the page withdrew, and immediately afterwards returned, ushering in Sunderland.

Mary received the minister very gra-

ciously, and motioning Anna to the further end of the room, invited him to be seated.

“My business will no tengage your Majesty long,” said Sunderland, “I have well considered the scheme of toleration I proposed to you, and an event has just occurred, which will give its immediate promulgation great popularity. May I hope that your Majesty’s intention to support me is unchanged?”

“Would I could see my way clearly in it!” rejoined Mary, anxiously. “I desire, sincerely, to act for the best; but so much is said on both sides, that I am quite distracted.”

“I almost ventured to hope that you had by this time secured the King’s approbation to the measure,” said Sunderland.

“I should have done so,” said Mary; “but Father Petre represents the project as

prejudicial. He affirms that it will give the appearance of weakness to our cause, while at the same time it will foster heresy."

"The holy father's zeal makes him unwilling to arrest persecution, even when administered by a rival priesthood," observed Sunderland, in a sarcastic tone. "This measure would create dissension among our adversaries, and, consequently, could not argue weakness in us; neither can it be thought to foster heresy, for the Papists will share the general indulgence."

"Ah!—how gladly would I purchase toleration for them," cried Mary.

"I have been at great pains to conciliate opinions on the subject," pursued Sunderland, "and, depending on your Majesty's support, anticipated success. In that case you would have been the happy means of opening the doors of the dungeons, and would have carried joy into a thousand

families. Such is the scheme you have been persuaded to abandon."

Mary was silent; but her pensive look and restless gaze, now turned on Sunderland, now on vacancy, marked the trouble within.

"It is very sad to think that these people should be treated so harshly, my lord," she said, at length; "I could almost weep when I reflect upon what they have to endure. But why do they persist in their heresy? They are as cruel to us in provoking persecution, as we are to them in inflicting it."

"Your Majesty must consider that I also am a heretic," said Sunderland, "and, by a parity of reasoning, ought to be persecuted too."

Mary smiled; but her smile was sad and faint.

"I would you were *not* a heretic, my

lord," she observed; "but, indeed, what you say makes me lament that I did not broach the subject to the King."

"It is not yet too late, madam," answered Sunderland. "The Council has not met, and your assurance to his Majesty, that you have well considered the measure, and approve it, will be sufficient to win his assent. We may not have such a golden opportunity as this again."

"Alas! it is too late," exclaimed Mary; "the King is closeted with Father Petre."

She paused a moment; but presently resumed, just as Sunderland was rising—

"Stay, my lord. You can tell the King the scheme has my support; and, as Father Petre is under the impression that I oppose it, here is my signet-ring as a pledge to his Majesty of your sincerity."

With a profound obeisance Sunderland took the ring, and dropping on his knee,

Mary extended him her hand, which he raised to his lips.

“Heaven guard your Majesty,” he said.

Anna, who could scarcely conceal the rage and disappointment with which Sunderland’s success filled her, touched a bell; the page without opened the door, and with another courtly bow the Earl passed into the ante-chamber. Thence he made his way through several intervening rooms and galleries, past a scattered line of pages, ushers, and marshals, towards the council-chamber, in the ante-room of which the thoughts he had been turning in his mind shaped themselves into the following words:—

“The ring will hardly effect it alone, but it is not my only resource. I shall perplex Nottingham, madden Halifax, and liberate from prison six thousand Dissenters. The letter, too, may yet answer a purpose.”

Thus musing, he approached a door, which an usher, who was in waiting, threw open for him, as he did an inner folding door, covered with crimson cloth, admitting the Earl to the council-chamber.

VIII.

THE PRIVY-COUNCIL.

SEVERAL of the ministers had already assembled in the room when Sunderland made his appearance, each of whom he saluted with a bow, or a word of recognition. The chamber was prepared for the approaching consultation. In the centre was a long table, covered with a scarlet cloth, on which were placed, at regular intervals, silver ink-stands, pens, and portfolios. High-backed chairs were ranged around the table,

and a chair of state, surmounted on the back by a crown, stood at its head. The walls were covered with tapestry, on which the royal arms were woven. Lords Middleton, Melfort, Dartmouth, and Godolphin, were standing together, conversing in whispers; old Lord Bellasis was leaning against the back of a chair, arranging his spectacles with one hand, while the other grasped the last number of Sir Roger L' Estrange's new journal called the *Observer*; and Lord Preston was talking in a low voice to the Lord Chancellor, Jeffreys.

As the atrocious severities of the latter have been recorded, it is doing him no more than justice to give equal prominence to such particulars of his life as represent him in a more amiable light. His nature, though cruel, was not destitute of redeeming qualities, and these were displayed on more than one occasion.

While as yet needy and unknown, attending the assizes at Kingston, in 1666, Jeffreys made clandestine advances to the daughter of a wealthy merchant, in which he was assisted by a friend, who was the young lady's governess. The affair was discovered, and the confidante turned out of doors. Hearing of her dismissal, Jeffreys went to see her, took pity on her situation, and married her. He always treated her with the greatest affection, and she lived to see him Lord Chief Justice of England. During the time he held this office, he signalised himself by a very remarkable action. The mayor and aldermen of Bristol had been accustomed to sentence the various delinquents brought before them, in their magisterial capacity, to transportation for life, and then to sell them, for their own profit, to the West Indian planters. Jeffreys, while engaged on the western circuit, heard of this

abuse, and repairing to Bristol, ordered the mayor to descend from the bench on which he was sitting, in his scarlet robes and fur, to the felons' dock, and there to plead as a common criminal. He then made him and the aldermen enter into heavy securities to answer any informations laid against them; and, by his threats and reproaches, so terrified the offenders, that the infamous traffic was discontinued. Nor was he always deaf to admonition himself.

At a later period of life, when Lord Chancellor, he was once sent by the court to influence a contested election at Arundel, in Sussex, and was directed to spare no exertion to secure the return to parliament of the court candidate. In order to intimidate the electors, he placed himself on the hustings by the side of the mayor, who was the returning officer, and who, though he well knew Jeffreys, pretended to be ignorant of

his person and rank. In the course of the poll, one of the court party tendered a fictitious vote, and the mayor rejected it, which so irritated Jeffreys, that, rising in a passion, he insisted that the vote should be recorded, adding, "I am the Lord Chancellor of this realm." The mayor, regarding him with a look of contempt, replied, "Were you really the Lord Chancellor, you would know you have nothing to do here;" and turning to the crier, he added, "officer, turn this fellow out." The crier seized Jeffreys by the arm, and, in spite of his remonstrances, fulfilled the mayor's commands. In the evening, the mayor was surprised by a message from Jeffreys, desiring the favour of his company at his inn; but, doubtful of the Chancellor's motives, he declined the invitation. Jeffreys then went to his house, and said to him, "Sir, I cannot help revering one who so well knows

the law, and dares so nobly execute it, and, though I myself was somewhat degraded thereby, you did but your duty. You, as I have learned, are independent, but you may have some relation who is not so well provided for. If you have, let me have the pleasure of presenting him with a considerable place in my gift, just now vacant." So handsome and ample an apology excited the admiration of the mayor, who, having a nephew in straitened circumstances, mentioned the matter to Jeffreys, and he immediately appointed the young man to the vacant situation.

Sunderland addressed himself to Lord Preston, the secretary of state.

"You received my letter, my lord, I suppose, respecting the prisoner taken by Colonel Kirke, last night?" he said.

"Yes," answered Preston, "and, according to your instructions, I instantly

issued an order to bring him before the Council this morning, together with the constable who apprehended him. They are now in attendance in the guard-room."

"Lord Preston and I have been talking over the matter, my lord," observed Jeffreys. "It seems that Colonel Kirke, in his report, accuses this young man of being an emissary of the Prince of Orange."

"So I understand," answered Sunderland, with an incredulous smile; "and therefore, I think it right to have the matter thoroughly investigated. It will pave the way for our declaration of indulgence to the Dissenters."

"Admirably," concurred Preston.

"You do not intend to propose the declaration to-day, eh, my lord?" asked Jeffreys.

"Indeed but I do," returned Sunderland, "and if you and Preston support me, I will

carry it. Have you brought with you the written opinion of the judges?"

"It is here," answered Jeffreys, pointing to his portfolio. "Have you secured her Majesty and the *corps diplomatique*?"

As he awaited a reply the folding-door was thrown open, and two personages entered the room, at whose appearance the whole of the ministers arose, and bowing to the foremost of them, moved towards the table. The new comers were James the Second and Father Petre.

James the Second was now in his fifty-sixth year, but his form was unbent, and, indeed, formally erect. He was somewhat above the middle height; his person had a commanding appearance; and his limbs were muscular and well-proportioned. His complexion was fair, and though marked with the small-pox, his countenance was pleasing, bearing so strong a resemblance to

that of his father, that if he had only worn the pointed beard of the latter, it might almost have passed for the same. In its mild and engaging expression, one would have looked in vain for some trace of that spirit which, since his accession to the crown, had so often urged him to misrule, alienating from his service some of the warmest of his friends, and the most faithful of his subjects. But it was still admitted by all that he truly loved his country. No monarch, indeed, since the days of Alfred, ever had the honour and glory of England more sincerely at heart. Reclaimed from his vicious excesses, he devoted almost all his time to public affairs, daily transacting a prodigious amount of business, correcting the abuses of the various departments of the state, promoting the improvement of the marine, encouraging trade, and carefully husbanding the public money. Weak in judgment, he yet pos-

sessed sufficient capacity to work out successfully the most elaborate schemes of others ; bigoted in religion, his piety was at least sincere. If his rule was stern and unrelenting, he was arbitrary on principle, mistaking violence for vigour ; and, though a vindictive enemy, he was a warm and steadfast friend.

Father Petre wore the sombre dress of his order. He was a dark, austere-looking man, with large bushy eyebrows, and his shaven crown well became his cadaverous countenance.

Originally only confessor to James, Father Petre had lately been appointed dean of his private chapel, and was now in constant attendance on the royal person. He was daily rising in the King's favour, and acquiring a larger share of confidence ; and he could thus canvass with James privately the designs of Sunderland, whom he

regarded as a rival, and whom he seized every occasion to oppose. Crafty, subtle, and ambitious, and versed in all the learning, the art, and the sophistry of his order, Father Petre was yet miserably deficient in practical knowledge of the English people ; and, by his undisguised hostility to the established Church, had raised in array against him all their religious prejudices. While, however, he was even criminally rash in his efforts to subvert the Church, and re-establish popery, he secretly leagued with the French ambassador against the pope, with whom, in common with the whole order of Jesuits, he was avowedly at variance. He had, indeed, personal reasons for enmity to Innocent XI.—that spirited pontiff having refused, even at the earnest solicitation of James, to create him a titular bishop, alleging as his reason that Jesuits were prohibited from accepting a

bishopric, and that he would sooner make a Jesuit a cardinal than a bishop. James then requested the pope to create his favourite a cardinal, but this also was refused ; and to mark his regard for Petre, whom his interest could not advance in the Church, James had appointed him a member of the privy-council.

Bowing to the assemblage, James proceeded to the chair of state, and then, desiring the ministers to be seated, Sunderland, in obedience to a gesture from the King, opened the business of the day.

“ It is my duty to request your Majesty’s first attention to what appears a mysterious affair,” he said. “ Yesterday there was a meeting of Dissenters on Finchley Common, which was dispersed by Colonel Kirke, who arrested the ringleaders, and with them a young man, named Moor, a *protégé* of the Earl of Nottingham, and whom the

colonel's report alleges to be an agent of the Prince of Orange."

James uttered an exclamation of anger.

"I have ordered the delinquent to be held in attendance in the guard-room," pursued Sunderland, "as I thought it likely your Majesty might wish to examine him."

"You did right," answered James quickly. "We may possibly trace the treason from the *protégé* to the patron, and if so, I will make a terrible example of Nottingham. Let the prisoner be brought in."

The usher in waiting left the room, and presently returned, accompanied by Moor and Snewin.

Moor looked pale and anxious, though his concern arose less for himself than for his patron ; but he assumed a more composed aspect as he met the glance of James, who eyed him inquisitively, and with an evident disposition to prejudge him. Snewin, duly

impressed with the importance of his position, bowed to the ground before the monarch.

“So, sir,” said James to Moor, “are you aware why you are brought here?”

“I believe I am accused of treason,” replied the young man. “If so, the charge is false. Your Majesty has not a more loyal subject than myself.”

“A fair speech, sir, but words are no proof of loyalty,” rejoined James. “You are said to be a secret emissary of the Prince of Orange.”

“I am calumniated,” returned Moor, firmly. “I have neither seen the Prince of Orange, nor held any communication with him.”

“How, sir?” cried James; but checking himself, he added, in a lower tone, to Sunderland, “have I misunderstood you?”

“Not at all, your Majesty,” replied Sunderland. “But the constable may have

made a mistake. State briefly, sir, why you apprehended this young man," he added to Snewin.

"Please your Majesty," said the constable, "I heerd yesterday as 'ow Colonel Sidney was to be at an inn in Cecil-street, to meet a gen'l'man there, and I posted off to arrest him. The Colonel got off; but I found this young blade in the house, and I warn't blind, so when I finds him afterwards with the psalm-singers on Finchley Common, I just lays my hand on him, when out drops a letter from his pocket, and, snatchin' it up, I finds it sealed with the Prince of Orange's signet."

"Produce that letter, quickly, sirrah!" cried James.

"I'll just present it to your Majesty," answered Snewin, with a profound bow.

With this he thrust his hand into his coat, but he did not apparently find what he

wanted, and after fumbling a while in the pocket, he drew forth his hand and dived both hands into the outer pockets of his coat, but with equal ill-success.

“Quick, the letter!” cried James.

“I ain’t a-got it, your Majesty,” stammered Snewin.

“Ha!” exclaimed James. “Is it lost?”

“More likely stolen, your Majesty,” observed Father Petre, in a soft tone. “At what time did you meet Colonel Sidney, yesterday?” he inquired.

“Your reverence, I see, adopts the story of the constable,” replied Moor, evasively. “I am wholly innocent of the offence imputed to me.”

“There is no evidence that the young man has been in communication with Sidney,” observed Jeffreys to Petre. “His Majesty wishes him, I believe, to explain how the letter the constable mentions came

into his possession. What have you to say about this letter, sir?" he added, before Petre could speak.

"It was brought to me at my inn, in Cecil-street, my lord," answered Moor, "by a gentleman styling himself Captain Ferdinando Gonzalez, and who desired me to convey it to Lord Nottingham, at Burleigh. This is all I can tell your Majesty about it."

"The explanation is satisfactory," said Sunderland to James. "Captain Gonzalez is a person of note, and has been mentioned favourably to me by the Spanish Ambassador."

Father Petre was still dissatisfied, but the other members of the council concurred with Sunderland; and James, who was unsuspicious to a fault, confiding even in avowed malcontents, was easily persuaded into the same opinion.

“You have explained away the charge brought against you, young gentleman,” he said to Moor, with an affability which no one could more gracefully assume, “and are now free to depart.”

“I should be proud to enjoy an opportunity of proving to your Majesty that I am incapable of disloyalty,” said Moor. And bowing, he withdrew.

“Who is this young man?” asked James, when he had retired.

“The new aspirant to the Mauvesin peerage, sire—the famous child of mystery!” replied Sunderland, with a smile. “I am quite interested in him, myself, and must try and do something for him. But I have now to call your Majesty’s attention to this meeting on Finchley Common. If some steps are not taken to prevent it, it will lead to the union of the Dissenters and the Church party. They must be kept asunder, and I

have framed a declaration of indulgence to the Dissenters, which will effect that object. It has the approbation of the Lord Chancellor, and of the judges, who have drawn up a written opinion in its favour. With your Majesty's permission, I will read it to you."

James assented; and Sunderland, opening a portfolio, drew forth a document, which he proceeded to read aloud.

It was the memorable declaration of indulgence to the Dissenters. The preamble set forth that "We have thought fit, by virtue of our royal prerogative, to issue forth this our declaration of indulgence, making no doubt of the concurrence of our two houses of parliament, when we shall think it convenient for them to meet." It then asserted the inalienable right of all men to worship their Maker according to the dictates of their own conscience. The

King claimed this right for those of his subjects who dissented from the communion of the established Church. He suspended all acts which restrained the freedom of worship; he cancelled those which disqualified any of his subjects from holding public employments, he liberated from prison all persons confined for religious opinions, nearly seven thousand in number; and, as a crowning act of clemency, he authorized all sects of Dissenters to meet openly for worship, wherever and whenever they pleased.

A scheme of toleration so noble and comprehensive was far in advance of the prejudices of the age, and Sunderland was prepared, when he had finished reading it, for the exclamations of dissent which broke from several of his colleagues.

“We shall have the Church in arms,” cried the Earl of Middleton.

“The Church preaches non-resistance,”

said Lord Preston, "and therefore will not resort to arms."

"Do not suppose it will practise what it preaches," observed Lord Dartmouth. "Poor Doctor Marley, the late Bishop of Winchester, sent for me on his death-bed to warn his majesty by me, almost with his last breath, that if an occasion arose, the Church would belie her preaching."

"I will never agree to this measure," said Lord Bellasis. "It is an infringement of the constitution."

"Then, you know the law better than I do, my lord," remarked Jeffreys, in the heated manner habitual to him. "But I am unwilling to believe it, when I am supported in my opinion by the whole of the judicial bench."

"It would make England a hot-bed of heresy," said Father Petre in an under tone to James. "It will blast for ever

your majesty's pious hope of converting the country, and mar all our past labours."

James looked grave and thoughtful. His natural good sense comprehended the aim of the measure, and inclined him to assent to it. On the other hand, his bigotry, aroused by the insinuations of Father Petre, was instinctively adverse to so bold and sweeping a toleration of the heretical Dissenters.

"I fear it would strengthen our adversaries, instead of weakening them," he said, at length; "and would have the evil effect of encouraging dissent."

"Persecution will encourage dissent, your majesty," observed Sunderland; "while toleration will render it insignificant. This measure has the approbation of Count d'Adda, and no one can suspect the pope's nuncio of partiality for the Dissenters."

“But we may doubt his capacity to form an opinion,” said Father Petre, quickly. “I am sure M. Barillon would not approve of it; neither would Don Pedro Ronquillo, the Spanish ambassador.”

“I am anxious that they should have an opportunity of expressing their sentiments upon it,” replied Sunderland; “and, as I imagined it might be agreeable to his majesty, I have requested them to be in attendance. Does your majesty wish to consult them?”

“Let them be summoned,” returned James. “They will not, I imagine, give you their suffrages.”

The usher in waiting was sent to require the attendance of the three ambassadors, who, pursuant to an arrangement with Sunderland, were closeted in a neighbouring room, impatiently awaiting the summons. The council were still discussing the merits of

the minister's scheme, when they were introduced.

Count d'Adda was a tall and very stout man, whose tonsure and sober garments marked his priestly profession. Don Pedro Ronquillo was of the middle size, well-made, and having a handsome, though rather sharp countenance, and quick black eyes. He was attired very gorgeously, always supporting a magnificent appearance, although, as his salary as ambassador was greatly in arrear, and he had quite exhausted his credit, no one could ever conjecture whence he derived his resources. Barillon was the last of the party.

James received them with a gracious salutation.

"So you have become a favourite of heretics, count?" he said to the nuncio.

"Your majesty refers to Lord Sunderland's concessions to them," answered Count

d'Adda. "I do not sanction them for their own sake, but for the good they may work to you."

"Which is unquestionable," observed Don Pedro Ronquillo; "and, therefore, I humbly recommend your majesty to yield to the advice of your minister."

"In Spain, sir, I believe, the King is guided by the counsel of his confessor?" replied James, sharply.

"Yes, sire," said Ronquillo; "and that is the reason why our affairs succeed so ill."

James coloured at the retort.

"You forget what is due to the ministers of your religion, sir, as well as to his majesty," observed Father Petre. "But M. Barillon, I know, will not raise his voice in favour of heresy."

"I may see objections to these concessions, as well as your reverence," answered Barillon; "but, on the whole, I think them

advantageous to his majesty's service, and consequently recommend their adoption."

"The queen, at least, will oppose them," said Father Petre, sullenly; "and his majesty will respect her pious scruples."

"I will be guided in my decision by hers," said James, hoping by this means to get out of the dilemma in which he felt himself placed.

"Then, I am authorised to inform your majesty of the queen's unqualified approbation of the project," said Sunderland; "in proof of which she has sent you this token."

So saying, he tendered the signet-ring to James, who received it with surprise, and cast a look of disquietude at his confessor. The latter, though secretly disconcerted, was too much an adept in dissimulation not to conceal his annoyance.

"I cannot resist such able pleading," said

James, after a moment's pause; "but I fear we shall not achieve our object. The fragment of the True Cross, found in Saint Edward the Confessor's coffin, fell from my hands this morning—an augury, no doubt, of ill. Our Blessed Lady grant, as my intentions are good, that the decision I have formed may be for the advantage of our holy Church, and the weal of the realm. Give me the declaration."

The important document was placed before him, and, receiving the royal signature, became a law of the land.

IX.

THE ENTERTAINMENT AT WHITEHALL.

THE magnificent reception rooms at Whitehall were thrown open for a grand concert and ball. The principal saloon, described by Evelyn, as “that glorious gallery,” blazed with light, streaming from numerous chandeliers, and reflected by superb mirrors. Hung with the choicest paintings, the walls exhibited the fairy tracery of Gibbons in their panelled oak; the ceiling glowed with gorgeous frescoes by Verrio;

and statues and busts, in bronze and marble, of rarest workmanship, were placed on pedestals around.

The saloon was thronged with court beauties, sparkling with jewels, and gallants, in their richest apparel. Near the centre, at a round table, was collected a noisy party, consisting of the Dukes of Berwick, Grafton, and Northumberland, together with Lord Waldegrave, engaged at basset. The lower end of the room was fitted up with an orchestra, and amongst the musicians were the celebrated harpsichordist, Baptist, and the amiable and gifted Purcell; while Pordage, Gosling, and Mrs. Parker, stood on a platform above, awaiting the royal command to commence the concert. In front of the orchestra were grouped many wits and poets of the day, numbering among them Dryden, Evelyn, Lansdown, and St. Evremond; and not far from them stood the philosopher

Boyle, conversing with Sir Christopher Wren.

Divided from the rest of the hall by a silken cord, the upper end of the saloon was set apart for the queen and her more favoured guests. On one side stood James, in close conference with Father Petre; and in the centre, on a fauteuil, placed on a dais, sat Mary, chatting with Catherine of Braganza, the queen-dowager.

Daughter of the celebrated Duke of Braganza, who was placed on the throne of Portugal by a revolution, in 1641, when he assumed the title of Don Juan the Fourth, Catherine was brought up, according to the custom of her country, in a convent, where she early acquired that zealous attachment to the Church of Rome, which she maintained till the close of her life. When little beyond her twenty-first year, she became the wife of Charles the Second, who re-

ceived with her, as a dowry, the Fortress of Tangier in Africa, the Island of Bombay in the East Indies, and money and merchandize to the amount of half a million. On her arrival in England, Catherine, in the first instance, made a favourable impression on the inconstant monarch; and in a confidential letter to Lord Clarendon, written on the day of his marriage, he thus describes her:—
“ Her face is not so exact as to be called a beauty, though her eyes are excellent good, and not anything in her face that in the least degree can shock me. On the contrary, she has as much agreeableness in her looks altogether as e’er I saw, and if I have any skill in physiognomy, which I think I have, she must be as good a woman as ever was born. In a word, I think myself very happy, and I am confident our humours will agree very well together.” Unfortunately for both, this anticipation was not realized, but it is

due to Catherine to say that the blame did not rest with her.

Catherine brought with her from Lisbon a bevy of Portuguese attendants, described by Grammont as "six frights, who called themselves maids of honour, and a duenna—another monster; who took the title of governess to those extraordinary beauties," and like the French domestics of Henrietta Maria, these ladies soon caused such confusion in the court, that Charles was obliged to send the whole cargo back to Portugal. In the list of persons appointed to succeed them, he had the effrontery to include the name of his favourite, Lady Castlemaine. Catherine instantly drew her pen across it, and when Charles insisted on its being retained, she replied that she would "return to her own country rather than be forced to submit to such an indignity." Persisting in his purpose, the King shortly afterwards

caused Lady Castlemaine to be presented at court, and hearing her name indistinctly, Catherine at first gave her a gracious reception, but the next moment, being informed she was Lady Castlemaine, the insulted queen started from her chair, alternately becoming pale as ashes and red with shame and anger, when the blood gushed from her nose, and she was carried from the room in a fit.

Becoming enamoured of La Belle Stewart, Charles was desirous of obtaining a divorce, when Buckingham, to facilitate his views, offered to carry off the queen to the Plantations. Charles rejected the proposal with horror, saying, "It was a wicked thing to make a poor lady so miserable, only because she was his wife:" and from that moment the project of a divorce was abandoned.

"The Duke of Northumberland seems indifferent to public opinion," Catherine ob-

served, as she glanced at the basset-table.

“He is as noisy as his brother Grafton.”

“Yet I almost fear he is really married to this unfortunate young woman,” answered Mary.

“The handsome Northumberland wedded to a poulterer’s daughter!” exclaimed Catherine. “Impossible!”

“No, not impossible. The affair has been so adroitly managed, that his majesty cannot ascertain the precise truth,” rejoined Mary; “but it is believed that Grafton has carried off the young woman to Ghent, and placed her in a convent.”

“Grafton is a dangerous enemy,” observed Catherine. “You recollect his two desperate duels, when quite a youth, and as a man, his fiery temper is unchanged.

“He leads a wild life,” replied Mary, “and is as reckless in speech as in conduct. This morning only, the King rebuked him for his

profligacy, urging him to atone for his errors by embracing our holy religion, and he replied, that he could not change his religion, for, though he had no conscience himself, he belonged to a party who had."

"He inherits the insolence of his mother," returned Catherine, calling to mind the many insults she had received from the Duchess of Cleveland. "Never shall I forget the day when Charles proposed to me to accord a public reception to that abandoned woman. Had it not been for the consolation of Lord Mauvesin, who stood by me at the time, and supported me by his counsel, I believe my heart would have broken."

"Poor queen!" sighed Mary. "It must have been a severe trial to you."

"But see! here is the Count de Lauzun," cried Catherine, glad to change the topic. "Who is the lovely creature with him?"

Mary turned quickly, with a look of in-

terest, towards the persons indicated, and perceived the Count de Lauzun approaching, accompanied by a young lady of extraordinary personal attraction.

Antoine Nompar de Caumont, Count de Lauzun, is described by the Duke of Berwick as the model of a courtier—noble, munificent, and sumptuous in his mode of living; addicted to high play, but always playing like a gentleman. The Duke adds, “his person was so diminutive, that it was impossible to conceive how he had ever been a favourite with the ladies.” Bussy Rabutin, who probably had received some affront from him, says, “*Lauzun est un des plus petits hommes, pour l'esprit aussi bien que pour le corps, que Dieu ait jamais fait.*” Saint Simon speaks of him as a small, fair-haired man, well made in person, and having a lofty and imposing countenance : sad, solitary, and stern in disposition ; very noble

in his actions; extremely brave, and sometimes dangerously daring; haughty, insolent, and imperious; full of resources, industry, and intrigue; a good friend, and a willing enemy.

Lauzun was a member of the illustrious house of Grammont, and early in life had become the favourite of Louis XIV., and the accepted lover of that monarch's cousin, the Princess of Montpensier. Loaded with royal favours, he treated the King in return with the greatest haughtiness; and when Louis consented to his marriage with the Princess of Montpensier, he insisted that it should be celebrated with the honours used at the espousals of the Royal Family. In the mean time, the Princess married him privately, and bore him a daughter, whom it was supposed he had sent to England. Louis, on consulting with the Princes of the blood, refused to have the marriage

solemnized in the manner desired, when Lauzun charged him with forfeiting his word, and plucking forth his sword, broke it, telling the King that he did not deserve to have it drawn in his service. Having heard him to an end, Louis threw his own cane out of the window, adding, that "it would cause him bitter regret to strike a gentleman." Lauzun was imprisoned in Pignerol, and, bent upon escaping, worked his way through the strong walls of the castle, when he was discovered on the outside by a sentinel, and carried back to his dungeon. At length the Princess of Montpensier bribed the Duke of Mayenne, with the principality of Dombes, to obtain his release, though Madame de Montespan and Louvois, dreading his influence over the King, if he should return to court, stipulated that he should be banished to England. He was persuaded to accede to this condi-

tion, and, repairing to London, soon became a favourite at the English court, where he commenced what Madame de Sévigné wittily calls "*Le second tome de Lauzun.*"

The Count de Lauzun and his lovely companion, who was as exquisitely attired, as she was beautiful and graceful in person, advanced towards the queen.

"I come as a suitor to your majesty," said Lauzun, with a profound obeisance.

"You can ask nothing I will not readily grant," answered Mary, with a gracious smile

"Permit me, then, to present to your majesty, Mademoiselle Saint Leu," rejoined Lauzun, bringing forward Sabine, "a young lady in whom I take a deep interest."

"She is welcome, both on her own account and on yours, count," said Mary.

So saying, she extended her hand to Sabine, who, bending before her, raised it

to her lips. After a few expressions of encouragement, intended to dissipate the embarrassment naturally felt by the young lady in her novel situation, Mary turned to Lauzun, while Catharine kindly addressed herself to Sabine.

“ You say you feel interested in this young lady, count ? ” observed Mary, in a low tone.

“ I do, gracious madam,” replied Lauzun, “ and on some other occasion, when fewer eyes are regarding us, and fewer ears are listening, I will tell you why I feel so interested.”

“ What you have already said is enough, count,” rejoined the Queen. “ If you desire it, I will place her near my own person.”

“ You will confer an everlasting favour upon me, madam,” said Lauzun, placing his hand gratefully and devotedly upon his heart.

Meantime, another presentation had taken place. It was that of Charles Moor, who was introduced to the King by the Earl of Sunderland, as his newly-appointed secretary. James could not forbear a smile on seeing the young man, but Father Petre regarded him with a frown.

At this moment, Catherine chanced to turn round, and remarking Moor, exclaimed involuntarily aloud, "How like Lord Mauvesin!"

"Did your majesty remark that exclamation?" observed Sunderland. "It is a confirmation of the young man's parentage."

"Ay, but not of his legitimacy," observed Father Petre.

Mauvesin was loitering near the royal circle, and, hearing his own name pronounced, fancied the queen dowager had addressed him.

“Did your majesty speak to me?” he asked.

“No, my lord,” replied Catherine. “Is that young gentleman your brother?” she added.

“No, madam,” he replied, in confusion, “he is no relation of mine.”

“He would not disgrace you, for he has a high and noble air,” said Catherine. “I pray you, sir,” she added to the usher in attendance, “bid Lord Sunderland present his friend to me.”

Mauvesin turned away, and at the same moment Moor was brought forward and presented to the queen dowager by Sunderland.

A gracious reception awaited him, and the pleasure he experienced in the kindness of Catherine was not lessened by the presence of Sabine.

As Mauvesin moved off with a heart full

of bitterness, he felt himself touched on the arm, and turning, beheld Father Petre.

“I read what is passing in your breast, my lord,” said the latter in a low tone; “you have found a serpent in your path, and would crush it.”

“I would,” replied Mauvesin, with concentrated rage.

“It is easily done,” said the Jesuit in a low tone, and with a significant smile.

“Shew me how,” said Mauvesin, “and claim from me aught you please in return.”

“Step this way, then,” said the Jesuit.

“They are plotting some villany against Charles Moor,” said Saint Leu, who had stood unnoticed within ear-shot of them; “I’ll follow and ascertain what it is.”

And he plunged into the crowd after the confessor and the nobleman, who made their way towards an ante-chamber.

An eloquent interchange of glances took place between Moor and Sabine. They were not unnoticed by Lauzun, who, looking up at the young gentleman's presentation to the Queen Dowager, appeared by no means satisfied with what he beheld.

"I did not expect this young man here," he muttered. "I have a further request to prefer to your majesty," he added in a low tone to the Queen.

"Name it," said Mary.

"It is that you will prevent all intercourse between Sabine and that young man," he rejoined, in the same low tone as before.

"If you wish it, assuredly, count," returned the Queen; "but who is he?"

"A pretender, whom I do not wish to encourage," said Lauzun. "By heaven!" he added, quickly, "they are exchanging love passages. I must interpose."

But ere he could do so, the King approached, and motioning Lauzun, took him aside, to the infinite annoyance of the latter, who cast an imploring look at the Queen. His situation, however, seemed so droll to Mary, that she could not help smiling at it.

“This must not go too far, however,” she said, at length, “or Lauzun may justly blame me.”

But moments are ages in the lives of lovers, and the few words that passed between Sabine and Moor, though light in themselves, and apparently unimportant, assisted as they were by the eloquence of the eyes, had sufficed to awaken a tender interest in either bosom which interruption could not check, and indeed only tended to increase.

As Mary looked round, the Queen Dowager took occasion to present Moor to

her, and the amiable sovereign was so pleased with his singularly prepossessing air, that she could not help mentally exclaiming:—

“Lauzun must do this young man an injustice. He is too modest to pretend to aught above him.”

Sunderland, who stood by, and remarked the favourable impression produced by Moor, endeavoured to improve it.

“I am glad your majesty likes this young man,” he said, in a low tone. “He has many determined enemies, and your majesty’s countenance will do much for him.”

“I thought he must have enemies, my lord,” said the Queen, in the same tone. “Doubts have been already thrown out against him.”

“Do not credit them, madam,” said Sunderland; “be assured he will one day establish his claims, and wrest back his title from the person who has robbed him of it.”

“ I hope so,” returned the Queen. “ In the mean time, he has won my good opinion.”

At this moment the King and Lauzun approached. The monarch was in a merry mood, and clapping his hands together, called loudly,—

“ A dance! a dance!”

The music immediately struck up a lively air, and James, looking round, cried—

“ Let those who are young enough join it instantly. I would make one myself, but my dancing days are over. My last attempt was with Lady Bellasis, whom I see yonder, and then it was a failure. If aught could tempt me, it would be yon lovely girl,” he added, glancing at Sabine. “ But come, the hay! the hay! Don’t you hear those inspiring strains, young sir?” he cried to Moor. “ Take a partner, quick. Why do you hesitate? I’m sure the lady will not say you nay.”

And he laughingly pushed Moor towards Sabine, who had only been deterred by the glances of Lauzun from giving him her hand earlier, and the young couple joined the dancers.

“The handsomest pair in the room on my life,” said the King, laughing. And he turned to walk towards a party of ladies, lower down the room.

“This is most provoking, gracious madam,” said Lauzun to the Queen.

“I am sorry you find it so, Count,” replied Mary, with a little malice, “but I could not help it.”

“I am sorry I brought her here at all,” cried the count.

“It was unwise to do so, if you feared she might excite too much admiration,” replied the Queen, smiling.

“I will go and see what occurs,” said Lauzun, moving off.

But he could not catch a glimpse of the young pair in the mazy circles of the dance, and thinking they might not have joined it, he proceeded towards the ante-chamber, whither Father Petre and Mauvesin had retired.

The central group in the saloon consisted of three ladies, who were engaged in animated conversation. One of them was Lady Bellasis, whose name was just mentioned by the King. She was the widow of Sir Henry Bellasis, who was killed in 1667, in a drunken fracas with Tom Porter, a groom of the bed-chamber, and his own intimate friend. On the death of her husband, Lady Bellasis retired from court, but returned in about two years, when the Duke of York, then married to Anne Hyde, publicly made love to her. He even went so far as to place a document in her hands, in which he solemnly engaged to marry her on

the death of his duchess ; and, at the same time, endeavoured, though ineffectually, to persuade her to become a papist. The Duchess of York died soon afterwards, and the story of the Duke's engagement with Lady Bellasis reaching the ears of Charles, the monarch summoned his enamoured brother to court, and after insisting that he should pursue it no further, said, "It is too much to have played the fool once. It is not to be done a second time, and at your age." Lady Bellasis, also, was so alarmed by the King's menaces, that she consented to give up the original contract, provided she was furnished with an attested copy of it; and, as a reward for this compliance, Charles created her a Baroness. She was tall in stature, and gracefully formed, but her features were by no means beautiful.

Next to her was Mrs. Godfrey, better known as Arabella Churchill; who, deficient

alike in personal and mental attraction, derived importance from her high connexions. She was the early favourite of James ; the sister of Lord Churchill, afterwards the Duke of Marlborough ; and mother of the scarcely less celebrated Dukes of Berwick and Albemarle. Grammont describes her as “a tall creature, pale-faced, and nothing but skin and bone ;” and explains, in his own diverting way, the mystery of James’s attachment to her. It was equally a source of annoyance to the Duchess of York, and of ridicule to Charles the Second, who, in alluding to his brother’s peculiar notions of feminine attraction, used to say of him, that “his favourites were imposed upon him as a penance, by his priests.” Arabella had since united herself to Colonel Godfrey ; but was still regarded with favour by James, and even by his Queen.

The third lady was the Countess of

Sunderland, as remarkable for beauty, as her companions were for the want of it. "She was a lady," says Sir Egerton Brydges, "distinguished by her refined sense, subtle wit, admirable address, and every shining quality." "She is one," observes Evelyn, "who, for her distinguished esteem for me, from a long and worthy friendship, I must ever honour and celebrate." Kennet lauds her for her wit and address; while on the other hand, the Princess Anne represents her as familiar with intrigues, both of gallantry and politics. She even denounces her as a dissembler and hypocrite. "I can't end my letter," she writes to her sister, the Princess of Orange, "without telling you that Lady Sunderland plays the hypocrite more than ever, for she goes to St. Martin's in the morning and afternoon, because there are not people enow to see her at Whitehall Chapel; and is half an hour before other

people come, and half an hour after everybody is gone, at her private devotions." She was accused by some of her contemporaries of carrying on a love affair with Colonel Sidney. Speaking of her being discovered in communication with the Prince of Orange, Mackintosh says, "Sunderland vindicated himself from all share in it, by the impossibility of his trusting Sidney, a man whom he must hate as the known lover of his wife. D'Avaux, on the other hand, treats the favour of Sidney with the lady as the source of his influence over her lord."

"It is certainly very imprudent of Lady Dorchester to come over from Ireland," said the Countess of Sunderland; "and I am sure the Queen will be highly incensed with her; for she only consented to the continuance of her pension, on the condition that she remained away."

"But his majesty has already prohibited

her from appearing at court," observed Mrs. Godfrey. "I protest I dreaded her appearance here. She is the rudest creature living."

"His majesty need not have troubled himself," smiled Lady Bellasis; "for Lord Dorset forestalled him. Have you seen his lordship's ode?"

"I have heard of it," replied Lady Sunderland. "By all accounts it is bitter enough."

"It is very just, as well as very severe," replied Lady Bellasis. "I only remember one verse, but you may judge from it of the rest:—

" ' Tell me, Dorinda, why so gay ?'

Why such embroidery, fringe, and lace ?

Can any dresses find a way

To stop the approaches of decay,

And mend a ruin'd face ?' "

"Fie, Susan!" exclaimed a voice behind her. "Fie—fie."

And turning, Lady Bellasis perceived the King, who had come upon them un-awares.

James, however, was in high good humour, and laughed loudly at their confusion.

“You were always fond of scandal, Lady Bell,” he said; “and, indeed, few of your sex are not. But make yourselves easy about Dorinda. She will not trouble you with her presence.”

“I am enchanted to hear it,” said Lady Bellasis: “and I am not sorry your majesty has become acquainted with my real sentiments.”

“If I were to approach every knot of ladies in the room, I should find them talking scandal, and very likely about you,” said James; “but here comes Barillon!” he exclaimed, noticing the ambassador. “I am glad to see your excellency,” he

added. "I want a word with you, in private."

And placing his arm kindly on the ambassador's shoulder, he nodded to the ladies, and walked with him to the ante-chamber, towards which others had directed their steps.

As Father Petre and Mauvesin entered this room, they found it apparently unoccupied.

"I can well conceive your hatred to Charles Moor," said the Jesuit. "And it will not be lessened when I tell you, that it can be proved, by unquestionable evidence, that your uncle, the late Lord Mauvesin, *was* married to his mother."

"You are mistaken, father!" cried Mauvesin. "No such evidence exists."

"It is you who are mistaken, my lord," said Father Petre. "I am not in the habit of making idle assertions. What think you

of the priest who married them, as a witness? You suppose him dead; but I tell you he lives, and can be produced."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mauvesin.

"You fancied when you burnt the letter written by your uncle, on his death-bed, to Lord Nottingham, that you had destroyed all proof," said Father Petre, with a bitter smile; "but it was not so."

"How do you know this?" cried Mauvesin, becoming white as ashes, and trembling violently.

"No matter. Let it suffice that I *do* know it, and that I also know how the letter was stolen, and by whom it was placed in your hands."

"You have said too much!" cried Mauvesin, fiercely. "This information must never pass your lips."

"It never shall pass them, if we come to a clear understanding, my lord," said the

Jesuit contemptuously; "but threats will not purchase my silence. I hate this Moor, and will enable you to crush him, but the service must be paid by implicit adherence to me. I must be served in all things unhesitatingly."

"Unhesitatingly!" echoed Mauvesin.

"To begin, then, you must convey this girl—this Mademoiselle Saint Leu, as she is called—secretly to France,"

"To France, father?" cried Mauvesin.

"It must be," said the Jesuit, in a freezing tone. "If not, Moor shall take your place, and wed her."

"I am ready to obey you," replied Mauvesin.

"It is well!" said Father Petre. "Now, listen to me. You must carry her off this very night. A lugger, in the service of the French government, is lying off Gravesend, the master of which will obey your orders

when he knows you come from me. I will give you the necessary credentials."

"If I am discovered, I shall for ever lose the King's favour," said Mauvesin, doubtfully.

"If you have misgivings, I have done," rejoined the Jesuit, with a sneer; "but remember, if she remains here, she will wed Moor—and then ——"

"It shall be done, father—it shall be done!" interrupted Mauvesin, hastily. "I will set about it at once. Give me the credentials to the captain of the lugger."

"Here they are," said Father Petre, placing papers in his hand.

At this moment a man's head appeared from behind a large Indian screen, standing near the door.

"A pretty scheme I have discovered," muttered Saint Leu, for it was he. "I must take instant measures to defeat it."

And he slipped unperceived out of the room.

“And now to reassure you,” said Father Petre, seeing Mauvesin still hesitate, “I will make this abduction the means of your rival’s disgrace.”

A vindictive smile lighted up Mauvesin’s features.

“Suspicion shall fall on him,” pursued the Jesuit. “Leave the means to me.”

“There seems some mystery about Sabine,” said Mauvesin. “Can you not unravel it, father?”

“Not now,” replied the Jesuit. “You will learn all at Paris. Suffice it that the French King feels a strong interest in her, and will give her a marriage portion.”

“How is it that Lauzun has come forward as her protector?” asked Mauvesin.

“Time will explain,” replied the priest.

“But see, here comes the Count. Lord Mauvesin was speaking in rapturous terms of the beauty of Mademoiselle Saint Leu,” pursued Father Petre to Lauzun, as the latter entered the room. “His lordship cannot conceal his chagrin at the evident preference which the young lady exhibits for Mr. Moor.”

“You have observed it, then, good father?” cried Lauzun, quickly.

“I take little note of such matters,” said the Jesuit; “but my attention was strongly called to it. I should grieve if she were to become the prey of an adventurer.”

“This must not be,” cried Lauzun. “Where are they? I have looked round the ball-room for them in vain.”

“This almost seems to confirm what you hinted just now, my lord,” said the Jesuit, with a significant glance at Mauvesin.

“What did he hint?” cried Lauzun, fiercely.

“His lordship thought he heard Moor propose an elopement,” said the wily priest; “but it could scarcely be.”

“There is no saying,” cried Lauzun, quickly. “Such things have been, and therefore may be again. But it must be prevented. I cannot find St. Leu. Curse on this rascal Moor! I will insult him in the face of the whole court.” And he hurried out of the room.

The Jesuit looked after him with a satisfied smile.

“What course am I to pursue, father?” asked Mauvesin.

“I will guide you,” replied Father Petre. “Come with me.”

They were passing forth, when the King and Barillon entered the room, and stopped them.

“A word with you, my lord,” said the monarch to Mauvesin.

“Nay, do not interrupt him, your majesty,” said the Jesuit; “he is going to prevent a rencontre between the Count de Lauzun and Mr. Moor.”

“In Heaven’s name, go, then,” said the King. “What is the matter, father?” he added, to Petre, as Mauvesin quitted the room.

“Lauzun is annoyed at the young man’s attentions to Mademoiselle Saint Leu,” replied the Jesuit.

“Oh! is that all,” exclaimed the King, with a smile. “Lauzun is hasty. Our own presence may be necessary to check any outbreak. We will return to the ball-room.”

As they moved forward, Barillon lingered for a moment behind with Father Petre, and exchanged a few hasty words with him.

“You have observed what is going forward,” said Petre. “Does it not bear out my report to you?”

“Fully,” answered Barillon. “I am now convinced of Sunderland’s treachery, and transfer my confidence to you.”

“I have engaged Mauvesin to execute our scheme,” said Petre, “and have so arranged it, that suspicion must inevitably fall on Moor.”

“It is well,” observed Barillon, laughing.

On quitting the ante-chamber, Lauzun glanced again round the saloon, and perceived Moor standing apart in a recess. The young man was quite alone, and Lauzun stepped hastily up to him.

“May I ask where Mademoiselle Saint Leu is?” said the Count, with freezing politeness.

“I must decline answering, sir,” replied Moor, with equal coldness.

“Decline!” echoed Lauzun. “Know you to whom you speak?”

“To the Count de Lauzun,” answered Moor, bowing stiffly.

“Then if you know thus much, you will know also that I have a right to make the inquiry,” rejoined Lauzun, haughtily.

“I recognise no such right,” said Moor. “All I can say is that she has left the palace.”

“Left the palace! without my permission!” cried Lauzun. “With whom has she left the palace?”

Moor merely bowed.

“I will have an answer—a direct answer, sir!” cried Lauzun, stamping his foot. “Where is she gone—and with whom?”

“You will learn nothing from me, Count,” replied Moor.

“You have some base design in view, sir,” cried Lauzun, transported with fury.

“I know not by what warrant you dare to use such language to me, sir,” rejoined Moor, “or why you presume to interest yourself so much about Mademoiselle St. Leu!—but if your design be to fasten a quarrel upon me, you have succeeded. If you desire to continue this conversation where it can be more freely pursued,” he added, touching the hilt of his sword significantly, “I am at your service.”

“I meet only my equals,” said Lauzun, scornfully. “I will not fight an adventurer.”

“The insult is as cowardly as it is unjust,” rejoined Moor; “but the man who will dare to insult his own sovereign will be little scrupulous towards others whom he conceives his inferiors in rank. I leave you, count.”

“Stay, sir,—not so fast,” cried Lauzun, grasping his arm. “I will forego my resolution. “I *will* meet you. In five minutes I will be in the park. Let us quit the palace separately.

“Be it so,” replied Moor, sternly.

And they walked away in opposite directions. Moor was followed at a distance by Mauvesin, who had partially overheard their conversation.

Meanwhile, the King entered the ball-room, and seeing nothing of Lauzun or Moor, proceeded towards the Queen. Mary addressed some inquiries to him respecting Sabine, which James was unable to answer, and an attendant was sent to summon the young lady to their majesties. In a short time the attendant returned with the intelligence that Mademoiselle Saint Leu was nowhere to be found.

“How very strange,” exclaimed Mary.

“ I must make the Count de Lauzun acquainted with the circumstance immediately.”

“ The Count has quitted the palace, gracious madam,” replied the attendant, “ more than five minutes ago.”

“ Indeed ! ” exclaimed the Queen ; “ and alone ? ”

“ Quite alone, your majesty.”

“ Where is Mr. Moor ? ” asked the King.

“ He is gone too, your majesty,” replied the attendant.

“ Ha ! ” exclaimed the King ; “ this must be looked to.”

And he turned to give some orders in a low tone to an usher, who bowed and quitted the presence.

The ball, meanwhile, proceeded gaily, notwithstanding the royal circle seemed disturbed, especially as no tidings could be

gained of the absentees. Soon after this Mauvesin approached Father Petre.

“Well,” said the Jesuit, in a low tone, “you have succeeded—she is gone!”

“She is gone, father,” replied the other, “but I have had no hand in it.”

“How?” said the priest.

“I suspect this cursed Moor has got the better of us!” said Mauvesin. “She is not to be found.”

“You should not have lost sight of her,” said the Jesuit, sternly. “If the scheme fails you will rue it.”

“Moor has already been punished,” said Mauvesin.

“By whom?” asked the Jesuit.

“Here comes the avenger,” rejoined Mauvesin.

As he spoke Lauzun approached the royal circle. A strange smile played upon his features.

“ Ah, Count, I am glad to see you,” said Mary. “ We all want to know what has become of Mademoiselle St. Leu.”

“ She is perfectly safe,” replied Lauzun.

“ And what of Moor? where is he?” asked James.

“ In a surgeon’s hands,” replied Lauzun, with a smile.

“ Then a duel *has* taken place,” cried James, gravely. “ Ah! Count, you are incurable. No wonder our brother Louis banished you. If you are not more discreet, I shall be obliged to follow his example.”

“ Nay, your majesty,” interposed Mary, “ the Count, perhaps, is not to blame. But I hope the young man is not much hurt?”

“ He has received a mere flesh wound,” said Lauzun, laughing. “ He is a very fair swordsman.”

“ Well, it will be no discredit to him to

have exchanged a few passes with the first swordsman of his day," said James.

"Not a whit," replied Lauzun; "and I have quite changed my opinion of him. He is a brave, high-spirited youth, and no adventurer."

Father Petre and Mauvesin exchanged looks.

"I am glad to hear you say so much, Count," said Sunderland. "That is precisely my opinion of him.

"And mine," added the Queen Dowager.

"Things have gone untowardly thus far," whispered Father Petre to Mauvesin. "But we will have our revenge."

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK THE SECOND.



THE BISHOPS.

I.

THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM.

THE publication of the new scheme of religious toleration had all the effect that Sunderland predicted. The Dissenters, whom it so completely emancipated, received it with transport ; the Church party were ashamed to condemn it ; and the great body of the nation hailed it with joy. The prison doors were everywhere thrown open ; men who had long pined in dungeons, in momentary expectation of perpetual banish-

ment—some even under sentence of death, for no other offence than a conscientious dissent from the Church, were restored to unconditional liberty. Of the Quaker community alone, more than twelve hundred persons were released from the various gaols; and the members of every sect were allowed the free exercise of their particular form of worship.

Addresses of thanks were poured in upon the King by every denomination of Dissenters from every part of the kingdom; and even five prelates of the Church lent a sanction to the Declaration. Distinguished Catholics were no longer the objects of popular abhorrence. The papal nuncio was invited by the civic authorities to a public dinner; and, on his way to Guildhall, was received by the populace with shouts. These demonstrations were followed by a profound quiet. “Not a speck in the heavens,” says Sir James

Mackintosh, "seemed to the common eye to forebode a storm. Even the ordinary marks of national disapprobation, which prepare and announce a legal resistance to power, were wanting. The current of flattering addresses continued to flow towards the throne, uninterrupted by a single warning remonstrance, of a more independent spirit, or even of a more decent servility."

But, under this calm surface, the busy spirit of faction was engendering a storm, Burnet wrote from the Hague, where he was in exile, to warn the Dissenters against the specious designs of the King. Lord Halifax, in an able pamphlet, entitled, "A Letter to a Dissenter," sought to bring them into a league with the Church. In concert with Lord Nottingham, he formed a coalition with the Earls of Rochester, Clarendon, and Danby, and endeavoured by another pamphlet, called "The Anatomy of an

Equivalent,” to arouse the Church from its false security. On the other hand, the government was not inactive. James himself made the cruelty of the Church of England the common subject of his discourse. It was even in contemplation to summon another parliament, and, in the mean time, the Declaration of Indulgence was moulded into a bill, under the imposing title of “Magna Charta of Conscience,” for the purpose of being submitted to the legislature. Sunderland opposed this ill-judged design ; and, though his opposition was successful, James began from that moment to lose confidence in him. “It was thought,” says Mackintosh, “that he himself even saw that he could not stand long, even by the friendship of the Queen, since the French ambassador began to trim between him and Petre, and the whole French party leant against him.” His adver-

saries, indeed, daily entangled him in new difficulties; and, though he frustrated their machinations for a time, he lost strength in every encounter.

At length, Father Petre proposed to attach to the Declaration of Indulgence an order that it should be read in the churches, which, though not absolutely an unconstitutional measure, was calculated to increase the hostility of the Church, while it could be of no advantage to the government. Sunderland urged strenuously on James these prudent objections to the order, at the same time expressing his belief that the bishops would refuse to comply with it; but his objections were overruled by Father Petre, who declared his determination to force it on the bishops, in the insulting language used by Rabshekah, the Assyrian general, to the officers of King Hezekiah. Sunderland, though ably supported by

Jeffreys, was defeated; the bishops were ordered to distribute the Declaration in their respective dioceses; and an early day was appointed for the clergy to read it in the churches.

This sudden blow took the bishops then in the metropolis by surprise. Allowed only thirteen days from the issue of the proclamation, before they were to carry it into effect—separated from their brethren—distrustful of each other—with the eyes of England and of Europe fixed upon them, they were called upon for an instantaneous and unanimous judgment on a matter of vital difficulty. Overwhelmed with consternation, they turned for counsel to their lay leaders, who, while the danger was yet distant, had so often and so loudly vindicated their cause. But their hopes of assistance from this source were doomed to disappointment. The Earl of Danby fled to York-

shire; Rochester was not to be trusted; Clarendon, though zealous, was unequal to the emergency; the Marquis of Winchester feigned madness; Halifax hesitated; and, unwilling to incur alone the responsibility of advising them, Nottingham would only recommend them to assemble together, and decide for themselves.

Meanwhile, the day appointed for the reading of the Declaration approached, and the bishops remained irresolute.

II.

LAMBETH PALACE.

ABOUT nine o'clock, one night in May, three men landed from a boat at Lambeth Stairs. A drizzling rain was falling, and though several barges and wherries were moored close by, or grounded higher up on the sand, not a waterman or lighterman was to be seen near them. The adjacent passage of Bishop's Walk looked dark and lonely, and some lights which gleamed from

the windows of the ancient gateway, opening to the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the few straggling houses on the road, opposite the south side of the church, in no way relieved the gloomy character of the scene.

Each of the men was armed with pistols and a hanger, and one of them carried a dark lantern, which, as they reached the bank, he carefully shaded, in order to avoid observation.

The foremost of the party, who was no other than Snewin, crossed over the road towards the church. The churchyard wall did not then extend, at the extremity nearest the river, beyond the transept of the church, so that the approach to the principal door was unobstructed. The three men posted themselves close to the door, whence they commanded a view of the palace-gateway, which almost adjoined the

church, being terminated, on its inner side, by the burial-ground.

Scarcely were they ensconced, when a carriage turned round the churchyard, and approached the gate. It contained two persons; one of whom was a very stout man, somewhat advanced in years, and clad in the habits of a dignitary of the church. The other was Colonel Sidney.

As the carriage halted at the gate, Sidney, who had been leaning forward a little, suddenly drew back.

The gate was now opened, and the carriage rolled under the archway. The coachman was driving on, when he was arrested by the check-string; and, drawing up, a footman sprang from behind the carriage, with a flaming link, and hastened to the door. Some one within seemed to hold it back, but at last, jerking round the handle, the servant drew it open. There was a

footway in front of the carriage, opening upon one of the side towers, in which was the porter's lodge; and, favoured by the momentary confusion, Snewin and his satellites ran round the horses' heads and gained it. They were rather abashed, however, when the reverend owner of the carriage stepped forth, to find themselves in the presence of the Bishop of St. Asaph.

Though possessed of but little talent, and perhaps less virtue, Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph, had contrived to render himself exceedingly popular. He was distinguished for his uniform opposition to the Court, and his zeal against popery. But he was also noted for his peculiar views respecting the prophecies, which he was in the habit of applying to passing events; and, according to Evelyn, he waited with anxious impatience for the advent of the Millenium,

believing it might certainly be looked for within the next thirty years.

As the Bishop of St. Asaph alighted, he turned round to the carriage again and shut the door himself, and then, to the amazement of his servants, who were looking for the appearance of his companion, ordered the carriage to be driven off.

“T’ other gen’l’mān an’t got out, your lor’ship—has he?” cried Snewin, touching his hat.

“What other gentleman?” rejoined the bishop. “Who are you, and whom do you seek?”

“I ’m Elkanah Snewin, one of his majesty’s constables,” said Snewin, authoritatively, “and am in search of Colonel Sidney.”

As he spoke he sprang upon the carriage-step, and looked in. The vehicle was empty.

“What does this mean?” demanded the Bishop, with well-feigned surprise.

“Never you mind, my lord,” answered Snewin, “I’ll see the colonel some other time. Come along, mates.”

His concluding words were addressed to his two myrmidons, who, without reply, followed him through the gateway.

The Bishop of St. Asaph passed on to a small court in front of the chapel. As he approached the hall of the palace, Sidney, who had taken refuge behind one of the buttresses, rejoined him.

“I have eluded them for the present, my lord,” he said, with a smile. “Do not forget how you are to account to the archbishop for my coming with you, for his grace will have nothing to say to Henry Sidney. I have promised Van Citters that all shall be settled to-night. A barge is in

waiting at the horse-ferry, and you must go at once to Whitehall."

"I will do my best," answered the bishop, hesitatingly.

They now entered the hall, where several servants were in attendance, one of whom conducted them to an upper chamber, where they were received by the archbishop and Tillotson.

Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a prelate as distinguished for learning as he was venerable for piety. All his life he had been conspicuous for probity of character, for modest and amiable manners, and for incorruptible virtue, avoiding rather than seeking preferment, which he had accepted only at the command of the King. At the breaking out of the Civil War, he was a fellow of Emanuel College, Cambridge; but having refused to subscribe to the Presbyterian Covenant, he was ejected from his

fellowship, and obliged to fly to the Continent. Here he became acquainted with the most illustrious of the loyal English exiles, who soon discovered his exalted worth, while they admired his eloquence and learning. He returned to England at the Restoration, and was appointed chaplain to Cosin, Bishop of Durham, and was afterwards elected master of his college, at Cambridge. He successively held the deaneries of York and St. Paul's, and the archdeaconry of Canterbury, and was in possession of the last-named dignity when Charles the Second, contrary to Sancroft's own inclination, advanced him to the primateship. He is described by Burnet as "a poor-spirited and fearful man, that acted a very mean part in all this great transaction." Yet he had for two years been banished from the court, and when the events he was mixed up with attained their

climax, he descended from his archiepiscopal throne into privacy, rather than violate his consecration-oath.

John Tillotson, the companion of this venerable prelate, was many years his junior; and though he had not yet been elevated to the episcopal bench, was destined, at a future time, to succeed his friend in the See of Canterbury.

Tillotson had received his early education among the Puritans, but was afterwards sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he gradually shook off his original prejudices, and exhibited a leaning towards the Church. He continued among the Presbyterians, however, till 1661, when he submitted to the Act of Uniformity. His first office in the Church was the curacy of Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire; but he soon quitted the country, and fixing his abode in London, was appointed preacher to the

society of Lincoln's-inn. He afterwards became chaplain to Charles the Second, and in this station, distinguished himself by preaching against popery, by advocating the doctrine of non-resistance, and by converting the Earl of Shrewsbury.

On the 2nd of April, 1680, he preached a sermon before Charles, on his famous topic of non-resistance, at which all parties professed to take offence. Dr. Hickes, in his account of it, says that a witty lord, standing at the King's elbow when it was delivered, said, "Sir, do you hear Mr. Hobbs in the pulpit?" Dr. Calamy's statement is, that Charles having slept while the sermon was delivered, a nobleman of his household stepped up to him, and said, "It is a pity your Majesty slept, for we have had the rarest piece of Hobbism that ever you heard in your life." Charles starting up, exclaimed, "Odds fish! he shall print it

then!" And the sermon was printed accordingly. But its publication did not affect the preacher's popularity. Though the principle it advocated was universally obnoxious, he was still enrolled among the popular party, and, in conjunction with Burnet, he had ministered to the last moments of Lord William Russell, attending him to the place of execution, and there urging him to disavow the right of resistance.

On the present occasion he looked pale, and his features were swollen and slightly distorted, for he had only recently recovered from a fit of apoplexy.

The archbishop extended his hand to St. Asaph, and at the same time glanced inquiringly at Sidney.

"Allow me to present Captain Clifford to your Grace, said St. Asaph. "He has been labouring for us among the non-conformists,

who have intrusted him with a message to you."

The Archbishop bowed, though somewhat coldly. Tillotson looked earnestly at Sidney.

"I think, my lord, we had better await the arrival of our friends," he said.

He turned the discourse on other topics, and, while they conversed, other visitors were ushered, in rapid succession, into the chamber. These were Trelawney, Bishop of Bristol, and brother of Colonel Trelawney, already mentioned in this history; Kenn, Bishop of Bath and Wells; the Bishops of Ely, Chichester, and Gloucester, and Drs. Patrick, Grove, and Shirlock. At last, the usher introduced Drs. Tennyson and Stillingfleet.

Tennyson is described by Mackay, as "a plain, good, heavy man, very tall, and of a fair complexion;" while Swift says of

him,* “He was the most good-for-nothing prelate I ever knew.” He took his degree at Bene’t’s College, Cambridge, where his talents attracted such favourable notice, that he was appointed preacher of the university; and when the Great Plague broke out, dispersing in every direction the af-frighted collegians, he had the courage to remain, with only two scholars and a few servants, during the whole time it prevailed. In 1680 he was presented by Charles the Second to the vicarage of St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields, and while holding this living, he engaged in a conference with Andrew Pulton, a Jesuit, on the respective merits of the Protestant and Catholic Churches. Though he failed to convince his opponent by argument, this conference won him considerable

* In a manuscript note upon the first edition of Mackay’s “Memoirs of Public Characters” preserved in the British Museum.

reputation. Since that event he had attended the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth at his especial request, during his last moments, and after a vain attempt to reconcile him to his duchess, accompanied him to the place of execution. He afterwards acquired a momentary notoriety by preaching a funeral sermon on Nell Gwynne, for which he was much censured by some, but applauded by others; and he certainly enjoyed as large a share of popular favour as any of his reverend contemporaries.

Edward Stillingfleet had also distinguished himself at Cambridge, and, after obtaining a fellowship at St. John's College, was presented by Sir Roger Burgoyne to the Rectory of Sutton, in Bedfordshire. In 1665, the Earl of Southampton appointed him to the Rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn, when he removed to London, and soon became distinguished both as a preacher and writer.

In the course of a few years he published several important works, particularly the “*Origines Britannicæ*,” or the “*Antiquities of British Churches*,” a work of profound research, which brought him immediate celebrity. After this he was appointed chaplain to Charles the Second; and being once asked by that monarch why he always preached before him from a book, which was not his custom elsewhere, he replied, “The awe of so noble an audience, but chiefly the seeing before me so great and wise a prince, makes me afraid to trust myself.” Charles was well-pleased with the compliment, when Stillingfleet added, “Will your Majesty give me leave to ask you a question, too? Why do you read your speeches to parliament when you have none of these reasons?” “Why truly, Doctor,” replied the witty monarch, “I have asked the parliament so often for money, that I am ashamed to look them in the face.”

As the new comers took their seats, the Archbishop reminded the company, in a few words, of the occasion of their meeting.

“Let us begin our conference in true wisdom,” he added. “We have put our trust in man, and our confidence in princes, and they have failed us. Let us now seek help from on high.”

The proposition was immediately agreed to, and the whole assembly knelt down, when the Archbishop, in an earnest and devout voice, implored the Divine blessing on their deliberations. The prayer concluded, they arose, and resumed their seats.

“I believe we are agreed not to obey his majesty’s order,” the Archbishop then said, “but we have not decided how to evade it. It is proper that I should state to you clearly the grounds of my own objections. I do not oppose the order because it concedes toleration to our dissenting brethren, and

though some of you, I fear, will differ with me on this point, you all know that it is no new opinion of mine. I think the King's order affects the very existence of the Church, and therefore I am bound to oppose it. This gentleman, Captain Clifford," pointing to Sidney, "who is known to the Bishop of St. Asaph, has been in communication with the Dissenters on the question, and can acquaint us with their sentiments."

"I have consulted some of their most eminent preachers, your grace," observed Sidney, "and, among others, Baxter, Howe, and Kiffin. They consider the order to be directed, not against the Protestant Church only, but against all other sects, and they implore you to resist it."

"If we resist the King," said the Archbishop, "we violate the principles laid down at Oxford, in 1683, which expressly says, that 'If lawful governors become tyrants,

or govern otherwise than by the laws of God or man they ought to do, they do not forfeit the right they had unto their government.' ”

“ And, moreover, we should disobey the injunctions of the Gospel,” urged Tillotson. “ St. Paul says — ‘ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; ’ and he adds, ‘ Whosoever, therefore, resisteth this power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. ’ ”

The Bishop of Bristol denied the application of this text. He was a truckling prelate, who, while the King had aimed only at absolute power, and left the Church unmolested, had been one of the loudest advocates of the doctrine of non-resistance; and, on one occasion, during the Monmouth rebellion, had so far forgotten his priestly character, as to take the horses from his

carriage, to assist in drawing the cannon of the royal army to the battle-field of Sedgemoor. But the King's hostility to the Church had wrought a change in his opinions.

"That passage was addressed exclusively to the Romans," he said. "The apostles were accused by the Pagans of a design to subvert the constituted authorities; and, in this injunction, St. Paul shewed that his mission had not that object, but sought to diffuse only a knowledge of God."

"Furthermore," urged Tennyson, "Nero was absolute, and the Romans knew no law except his will. With us, the King is as much bound by the laws, as we ourselves are bound by them."

"Holt and Pemberton, whom I have consulted on the question, both agree, that the King's order, being founded on the dispensing power, is unlawful," remarked Stillingfleet.

“And your grace has the declaration of eighty of the metropolitan clergy, that they cannot in conscience, obey the order,” observed the Bishop of St. Asaph. “For my own part, I believe we are warned of this enemy in the book of Revelations ; and, in our resistance to Rome, we shall accomplish the prophecy therein declared.”

There was a momentary silence when the Bishop of Bath and Wells addressed the primate. Kenn was an amiable and pious prelate, at once loyal to the King, and devoted to the Church. His conduct in reference to the Monmouth rebellion, presented a pleasing contrast to that of Trelawney. Horrified at the barbarity of the victors, he had hastened, on the suppression of the revolt, to the presence of James, and throwing himself at his feet, besought him, with tears, to deal more leniently with the rebels. His intercession was successful,

and had never been forgotten by the people.

“We have had argument enough, your grace,” said the good bishop; “for as no fear of consequences can deter us from doing our duty, no argument can persuade us to rebellion. We may protest, but we cannot resist. Let us, therefore, draw up a humble petition to the throne, praying his majesty to recall his order, as we cannot conscientiously obey it.”

“The proposition is worthy of you, my lord,” observed St. Asaph, in obedience to a private suggestion from Sidney. “The sole objection to it is, that there is only one day for his majesty to consider our petition, so that if we decide upon it, it must be carried to him to-night.”

“To-night?” echoed several voices.

“Late as the hour is, it must be done,” said the Archbishop. “Are all agreed to the petition?”

The answer was unanimously in the affirmative.

“It must be conveyed to his majesty, then, in the most dutiful manner that circumstances will admit,” said the Archbishop. “As primate of the Church, I ought to undertake the sole responsibility of the transaction; but, as you are aware, I am labouring under the royal displeasure, and cannot appear at Court.”

“I should be a poor substitute for your grace, and an unworthy representative of the Church,” observed Kenn; “but if accounted worthy, I will gladly convey the petition.”

“You must not incur the danger alone,” answered the Archbishop. “There are five other prelates present; and it will be more respectful for all to go.”

“Your grace is right,” remarked the Bishop of Gloucester. “We will stand or fall together.”

The Bishops of Bristol, Chichester, and Ely readily assented to the proposition. St. Asaph was silent for a moment, but he was prevailed on by Sidney, unobserved by the others, to signify his readiness to accompany them.

“I rejoice that you are agreed,” the Archbishop then said. “Though I cannot go with you, I will draw up the petition, and my handwriting will prove my connexion with it.”

“Nay, my lord,” interposed Kenn, “let the blame rest with us alone. As our primate, you may be singled out for punishment, and suspended from your exalted office.”

“Our lives are in the Lord’s hands,” answered the Archbishop, solemnly. And in a lower tone he uttered the words which he afterwards caused to be inscribed on his tomb—“ ‘The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord!’ ”

Amidst a profound silence, he then drew up the petition, which he afterwards read to the assembly.

The document set forth that “their averse-ness to read the King’s declaration arose neither from want of the duty and obedience, which the Church of England had always practised, nor from want of tenderness to Dissenters, to whom they were willing to come to such a temper as might be thought fit in parliament and convocation; but because it is founded on a dispensing power declared illegal in parliament; and that they could not, in prudence and conscience, make themselves so far parties to it as the publication of it in the Church, at the time of divine service, would amount to;” and it concluded by “humbly and earnestly entreating his majesty not to insist on their distributing and reading the said declaration.”

In this memorable document, the Archbishop met the views of all his companions. It was sufficiently temperate to satisfy the timid—sufficiently decided to please even Sidney. Having seen it approved of by all, the latter had no further purpose to accomplish at the palace; and as he desired to withdraw privately, he arose, and took his leave.

In the hall below, one of the valets hastened to attend him.

“Is the front gateway the only outlet from the palace?” asked Sidney, slipping a guinea into his hand.

“There is a garden-door, sir, opening into Bishops’ Walk,” answered the man.

“That will suit me exactly,” rejoined Sidney. “Be good enough to shew me the way to it.”

Taking a key from a hook against the wall, the valet conducted Sidney through a

postern in the Lollard's Tower, to the garden, and stopping before a door in the wall, unlocked it. After a hasty glance down the Bishops' Walk, Sidney passed out.

Hurrying in the opposite direction to the palace, he soon reached the ferry, where he engaged a boat, and embarked for Whitehall Stairs.

III.

THE MANDATE FROM LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

ON landing at Whitehall Stairs, Sidney pulled his hat over his brow, and drawing his heavy cloak around him, quickly mounted the stairs, which, owing to the lateness of the hour, were completely deserted, and encountering a sentinel, by whom he was challenged, but who allowed him to proceed on receiving a password, entered a small court-yard adjoining the palace.

Arrived there he coughed slightly, and

was instantly joined by another personage, muffled, like himself, in a large cloak.

"Is it you, Van Citters?" asked Sidney, in a low tone.

"Ay—ay," replied the Dutch ambassador; "what success?"

"Complete," cried Sidney. "The bishops are ours—they have signed the petition."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Van Citters. "The first step is taken."

"They will be here presently," pursued Sidney, "and you must see them enter the palace. I must be gone. This is dangerous ground for me."

With a hasty adieu to the ambassador he crossed the court, plunged through the arched gateway at the further end, where another sentinel was pacing to and fro, and gaining Parliament-street, shaped his course towards Charing-cross.

Scarcely was he gone when another person, who had remained concealed behind a projection in the wall during his brief interview with the ambassador, glided after him, and eluding the notice of Van Citters, followed him cautiously into the street.

The night was profoundly dark, and the dull lamps suspended over the streets by ropes, or the occasional links borne by the passengers or their attendants, only served to render the gloom more palpable, when Sidney, as he was hurrying forward, caught sight of a young man advancing towards him, and accompanied by a link-boy. The appearance of this young man immediately checked his progress.

“Well met, Mr. Moor,” he cried, stepping up to him, and about to take his hand, when he observed that the other’s right arm was in a sling. “What! a duel, ha?”

“A slight hurt, colonel,” replied Moor;

“but I have still one hand left for my King’s defence,” he added, significantly.

“Which King?” asked Sidney, in a low tone.

“King James, to be sure,” replied Moor.

“I own no other sovereign.”

“Your loyalty will not, perhaps, prevent you from doing me a service,” asked Sidney.

“I can render you none incompatible with my duty, colonel,” replied Moor, “and I am scarcely discharging it in allowing you to pass free.”

“You would find it difficult to arrest me in your present disabled condition,” rejoined Sidney, laughing; “but I know you have no such intention. Deliver my message or not, as you think proper, to Lord Sunderland, but if you are a true friend to him, you will tell him that if he does not resign to-night, to-morrow he will endanger his head. And now, adieu, Mr. Moor; we shall meet again.”

And he was moving off, when a man who had halted behind him suddenly dashed forward, and snatching the torch from the link-boy, held it up to his face so as fully to disclose his features.

“I arrest you in the King’s name for treason, Colonel Sidney,” cried Lord Mauvesin—for it was he—“and I arrest you, also, Charles Moor, for aiding and abetting a notorious spy and traitor.—What ho! the guard, the guard! Call the guard, quick!” he added, to the link-boy.

And as he spoke, he threw down the link, and seized Sidney, who, however, broke from him, and darted down the street in the direction of Westminster Hall.

“If you attempt to move, traitor, I will stab you,” exclaimed Mauvesin, placing the point of his weapon at Moor’s breast.

“It is you who are the traitor, villain!” cried Moor, darting suddenly backwards.

And drawing his sword with his left hand, he attacked Mauvesin with such vigour and determination, that, notwithstanding the disadvantage under which he laboured, he would speedily have held his adversary at his mercy, if it had not been for the arrival of a detachment of the guard, who, on hearing the clash of steel, hurried forward. Along with the officer of the guard came the Count de Lauzun.

“You are hard pressed, and by a left-handed man,” cried the latter, as he laughingly interposed. “What’s the matter?”

“Arrest him,” cried Mauvesin, scarcely able to speak from fury. “Do you not hear me?—arrest him, I say!”

“Yes, we hear you, my lord; but why should we arrest him more than yourself?” said the officer of the guard.

“He is a traitor—a conspirator!” cried Mauvesin. “I caught him in close con-

ference with an avowed agent of the Prince of Orange. Let him deny it if he can!"

"Is this so, Mr. Moor?" asked Lauzun, gravely.

"The meeting was purely accidental," replied Moor. "Colonel Sidney stopped me in the street."

"It is false, traitor!" cried Mauvesin. "It was an appointment—I overheard your conversation. You were charged with a warning message to Lord Sunderland."

"If you overheard what was said, you would know that I refused to receive the message," replied Moor; "but it was a simple caution."

"His majesty shall judge of its import," cried Mauvesin. "But we waste time in parleying here. Place this man in arrest, sir," he added, to the officer of the guard.

"Will you give me your word, Mr.

Moor," interposed Lauzun, "that you will not make any attempt to escape?" And on receiving Moor's assurance to that effect, he added to the officer, "I will be responsible for his appearance before the King. You may withdraw your men."

"You will take note of all that has passed, sir," said Mauvesin to the officer. "The Count de Lauzun may have to render an explanation to his majesty for his own interference."

"Do not concern yourself about me, my lord," rejoined Lauzun, contemptuously. "I am always ready to render explanation to those who have a right to require it of me. Come, Mr. Moor, we must to the palace."

"I attend you, Count," replied Moor.

"You will find us at the palace, my lord," said Lauzun.

"I shall not lose sight of you, depend

upon it," replied Mauvesin, following them as they moved off.

"Permit me to thank you, Count, for your generous espousal of my cause," said Moor, as they proceeded, "as well as for the handsome manner in which I am told you have lately spoken of me to his majesty."

"I have only done you justice," rejoined Lauzun, carelessly. "But you have a warm advocate with me."

"An advocate, Count!" exclaimed Moor, in surprise. "In whom?"

"In Mademoiselle Saint Leu—my ward," rejoined Lauzun. "She always speaks of you with grateful interest."

Moor's heightened colour could not be seen, but his voice betrayed his emotion.

"Mademoiselle Saint Leu attaches too much importance to my slight services," he said.

“Sabine is now a great favourite with her majesty,” answered Lauzun; “and you will no doubt see her at the palace, this evening.”

Moor made no reply, for his feelings kept him silent, and they presently afterwards reached the palace.

It was a reception night at Whitehall, and the saloon was crowded, as on a former occasion, with court beauties and gallants. The Queen occupied her accustomed place, and was conversing with Father Petre.

“And so you tell me Mauvesin is passionately attached to Mademoiselle Saint Leu, father?” she said.

“Passionately,” replied the Jesuit, “and I hope your majesty will exert your influence to promote his suit.”

“But I do not like interfering in matters of the heart,” rejoined Mary; “and she appears to have no liking for him.”

“The match will be highly advantageous to her,” replied Father Petre, “and your majesty will permit me to say, that it is scarcely worth while to consult a silly girl’s inclinations when her true interests are served. Lord Mauvesin,” he added, in a meaning voice, “is devoted to us, and at a critical juncture like the present, we can ill afford to lose so powerful a supporter.”

“We must not lose him,” said Mary, quickly.

“You will bind him to us for ever, by lending him aid in this matter,” returned Father Petre.

“Well, I will see what can be done,” smiled Mary; “but hearts are not to be forced, even by a queen.”

“If your majesty deigns to interfere, I shall account the marriage as settled,” said Father Petre. “The only danger I apprehend is that of delay.”

“I will speak to Mademoiselle St. Leu at once,” said Mary; and calling an usher she gave him some directions, and then added to Father Petre, “leave me for a moment, father, and when I have spoken with her you shall know the result.”

Father Petre made a low obeisance, and withdrew, as Sabine advanced with the usher.

“You have always professed great attachment to me, Sabine,” said the Queen, kindly.

“Not more than I have ever felt, gracious madam,” replied the other.

“I am sure not,” said Mary, “and you will believe that I feel great interest in your welfare. However much I may regret to lose you, I shall not allow my own inclinations to interfere with your happiness.”

“Lose me!” cried Sabine. “I do not understand your majesty.”

“Have you sufficient confidence in my affection for you to allow me to dispose of your hand in marriage?” asked the Queen.

“I am so taken by surprise that I scarcely know how to answer, madam,” replied Sabine, blushing deeply, and then growing pale.

“Then I will answer for you,” said the Queen. “You will?”

“Oh, no, madam, oh no!” cried Sabine, hastily, “that is unless—”

“Unless I happen to make choice of somebody quite agreeable to you—a good reservation, truly.”

“I did not say so,” replied Sabine, again blushing deeply.

“But I infer it,” cried Mary, playfully. “Well, the match is in every respect desirable. The suitor is amiable and handsome, and desperately in love.”

“ Oh! your majesty,” cried Sabine, casting down her eyes.

“ More than that, he is noble,” pursued the Queen.

“ Noble!” echoed Sabine, starting, and turning pale. “ I have mistaken your majesty.”

“ How can that be, I have mentioned no name?” replied the Queen.

“ It is needless, madam,” said Sabine.

“ What, then, you guess that I mean Lord Mauvesin?” cried Mary.

“ I fancied your majesty might refer to him,” said Sabine, coldly.

“ And will you not marry him?” asked the Queen.

“ Not for worlds,” replied Sabine, with decision.

“ You are very resolute, Mademoiselle,” said the Queen, somewhat piqued. “ May I ask if your affections are already engaged?”

“Your majesty will excuse me answering that question,” returned Sabine.

“Well, we shall see what the Count de Lauzun has to say on the subject,” cried Mary.

“The Count will not, I am sure, attempt to influence my inclinations,” said Sabine; “but if he did, his efforts would be unavailing.”

“We shall see,” said Mary.

And as Sabine withdrew, Father Petre advanced to the Queen.

“I cannot give you much hope from the young lady, father,” observed Mary; “she is very resolute in her refusal. Your only chance is with the Count de Lauzun.”

“Your majesty’s influence with the Count is far greater than mine,” said the Jesuit, with significance. “*He*, at least, will obey you.”

“I do not know that, father,” replied Mary, “but I will try.”

“If you fail, I have a plan in reserve,” said Father Petre. “And see, here comes the Count, accompanied by Charles Moor.”

“Shall I tell you what I think, father?” said the Queen: “I am of opinion that Lord Mauvesin has a rival in young Moor.”

“Your majesty is right,” rejoined the Jesuit, “and I shall take care that the rivalry does not long exist.”

“You must use fair means, father,” said the Queen, “or I have nothing to do with the proceedings.”

“Of course, madam,” replied the Jesuit; “in love all means are fair.”

As he spoke, Lauzun and Moor advanced towards the King, who was standing at a little distance, engaged in deep conversation with Sunderland and Barillon, and they had scarcely made the customary obeisances

when Mauvesin came up. Father Petre watched the group with great anxiety, and noted that as Mauvesin addressed the King, a heavy cloud gathered on the royal brow. James then turned quickly to Moor, and notwithstanding Lauzun's interference, it was evident, from his angry glances and gestures, that the weight of his displeasure was falling on the young man's head. At the close of the King's speech, Moor bowed profoundly, and withdrew, and Father Petre, unable longer to restrain himself, walked up to Mauvesin, and inquired what had happened.

"Moor is dismissed the Court," replied the young nobleman, joyfully. "I will tell you why, presently. But how speed you with the Queen?"

"But indifferently," replied Father Petre. "Step this way."

At this moment Lauzun looked round

for Sabine, and seeing her at a little distance, was about to lead her away, when he was checked by a gesture from the Queen, who called him to her.

“I am glad you have brought Mademoiselle Saint Leu with you,” said Mary, “for it was in reference to her that I summoned you. She has had an offer of marriage.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Lauzun, in surprise; “from whom?”

“From Lord Mauvesin,” said the Queen.

“His lordship does her much honour,” said Lauzun, “but I must decline his offer.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you!” murmured Sabine, pressing his arm.

“I cannot take your refusal, Count,” said the Queen.—“I am sure your majesty will advocate Lord Mauvesin’s suit with Mademoiselle Saint Leu,” she added, turning to

James, who approached her with Barillon and Sunderland, followed by Father Petre and Mauvesin.

“Assuredly,” replied the King; “the match would be highly agreeable to me—highly agreeable, Count.”

“But not to me,” remarked Lauzun, “I would rather give her to the true man than to the pretender—to Charles Moor, who should be styled Lord Mauvesin, than to him who usurps the title.”

James coloured to the temples. Sabine, already pale, was overwhelmed with confusion. Mauvesin gnawed his lips, and trifled with the hilt of his sword.

“The Count de Lauzun talks as if he had the disposal of this young lady,” said Father Petre, stepping forward, “but he has no such right.”

“Who will dispute it?” cried Lauzun, sternly.

The Jesuit merely bowed, and Barillon advanced.

"I will," he cried. "I claim her on behalf of the King of France, my master."

And he drew forth a despatch, bearing a large red seal, which he opened and presented to James.

"Ha! from our brother Louis!" exclaimed the King.

And as he read over the mandate, Lauzun turned to Mary.

"I have to thank your majesty for your gracious attention to my ward," he said; "but after what has occurred, you will forgive me if I remove her from the palace."

"You will, of course, exercise your own discretion in the matter, Count," said Mary, drily.

Lauzun was moving away with Sabine, when Barillon planted himself before him.

“Not so fast, Count,” said the ambassador; “you must deliver that young lady to me.”

“How, sir!” cried Lauzun, furiously.

“It must be so, Count,” said James, raising his eyes from the despatch; “such are the orders of the King of France, and you must permit me to say that I will see them obeyed.”

Father Petre, Mauvesin, and Barillon, exchanged glances of triumph, while Lauzun with difficulty repressed the burst of indignation which nearly overmastered him.

“As you please, sire,” he said to the King, “but you will repent your acquiescence with this tyrannical mandate. M. de Barillon, I now deliver this young lady to your charge; and look well that you violate it in no respect, or you will rue it to the end of your life.”

"I obey my sovereign's commands, and not your threats, Count," replied Barillon.

He then took Sabine's hand from Lauzun, who bowed round, and withdrew.

"Be not alarmed, young lady," said Barillon. "I am commanded by the King to place my house at your disposal."

Sabine made no reply, but suffered herself to be led from the room. As they descended the great staircase, she thought she beheld Lauzun and Moor in close conference in a side-passage.

Soon after Sabine's departure, Sunderland approached James.

"You seem charged with some extraordinary intelligence, my lord," said the King, looking anxiously at him.

"I am so, my liege," replied Sunderland. "Six bishops have just arrived at the palace, who request an immediate audience of your majesty."

“Six bishops!” exclaimed James, bursting into fury, “six traitors. Let me see them—let me see them.”

“The great work is beginning to have effect, sire,” remarked Father Petre. “These sectarians have come to remonstrate with you.”

“They shall learn, to their cost, that I am their master,” cried James. “Bring them to the council-room, at once,” he added, to Sunderland.

As the minister withdrew to obey the royal mandate, he darted a glance at Mary, who replied by a gesture of equal significance.

